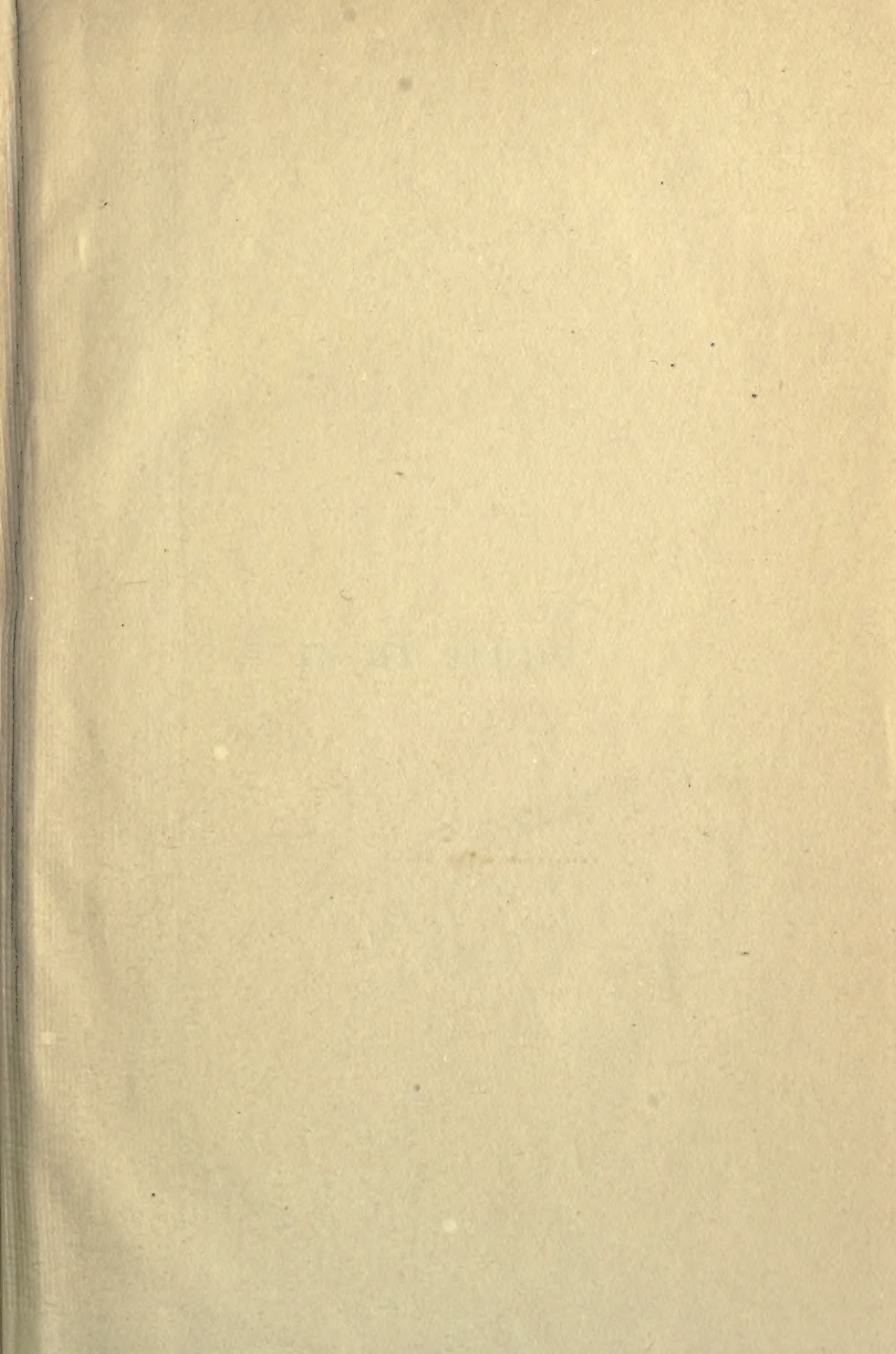



IN MY STUDY



ANTHONY DEANE

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IN MY STUDY

BY
ANTHONY DEANE

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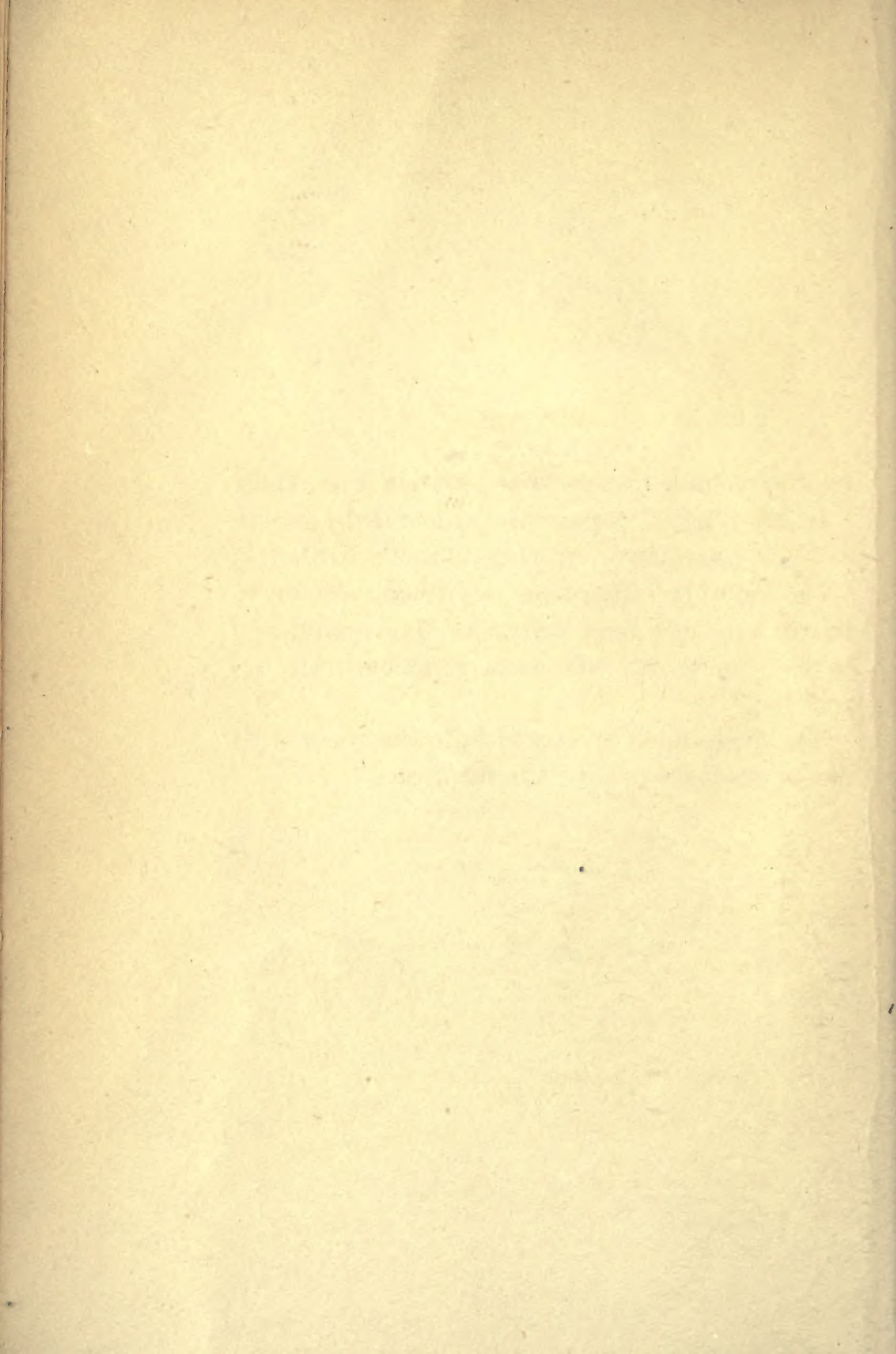
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IN this volume you have a selection from those "In My Study" papers which, month by month through more than ten years, I have written in "The Treasury" Magazine. My thanks are due to its readers, who have asked for the reprint, and to its proprietors, who have sanctioned the reprinting.

The lines added by way of tail-piece made their first appearance in the "Church Times."



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IN MY STUDY

“ Please to Remember . . . ”

IF, dear Sir or Madam, you happen to be—how shall we put it nicely?—well, not so young as you were, you will recollect a time when November the Fifth was a quite important festival. If at that period you lived as a child in London, I will wager that you were scarce dressed before your nose was against the window. Presently, thrilled with pleasure, you heard a distant clamour; it drew nearer, and—yes, there was the first Guy of the day! Clad in loose garments, mystic, wonderful, it rocked uneasily on a barrow. Its great eyes met yours with a look of—I can find no other words—intelligent imbecility; a clay pipe drooped from its mouth, it had a flaxen wig, and—O, supreme humour!—a monstrous nose of flaming red. Round it stood a group of men and ragamuffins chanting that noble, that glorious, that inspiring song:

Please to remember the Fifth of November,

Gunpowder treason and plot!

I see no reason why gunpowder treason

Should ever be forgot.

Hollo, boys, hollo, boys, God save the Queen!

To what forgotten bard does England owe this lyric ? Then the door-bell rang and tin mugs were waved, appealing for pence. By the time that half a dozen Guys had appeared, each with its howling retinue, and been wheeled away, the reception which one's elders gave the seventh seemed cruelly unsympathetic. You were prepared to welcome any number ; the very memory of their comic attire, their air of solemn helplessness, made you bubble with laughter for days afterwards. I don't know when Mr. Guy Fawkes first made his tour of the streets, whether the commemoration began in 1606, whether or no it was intermitted in Puritan days.¹ But the Guy of 1678, or thereabouts, seems to have been exactly like the Guy of two hundred years later. Perhaps you remember that delightful little letter from Diana Temple, the child of Sir William and Dorothy ; she died in 1679, aged fourteen. "And now if Papa was here," the child writes, "I should think myself a perfect Pope, though I hope I should not be burnt, as there was one at Nell Gwynn's door the fifth of November, who was sat in a great chair, with a red nose half a yard long, with some hundreds of boys throwing squibs at it."



Later in life you were not content, I think, merely to regard Guy Fawkes through a window ;

¹ In 1660 Mr. Samuel Pepys notes : "This fifth of November is observed exceeding well in the City ; and at night great bonfires and fireworks."

you helped to fashion one yourself. This, perhaps, was at a preparatory school, and the uncouth figure had a cane in his hand, and resembled, as nearly as skill could contrive or prudence allow, the figure of your revered preceptor. Then, too, came the age of Fireworks. You began, I dare say, with those labelled "Parlour." There was brown paper which smouldered into the likeness of ferns; there were Pharaoh's Serpents' Eggs; there was magnesium wire; there was Vesuvius—a little cone which fizzed and sputtered golden sparks. Yet these were not what Mr. Kipling calls the Real Thing. A degree better were the coloured fires which one bought in little pill-boxes or—a purer joy—compounded for oneself with the aid of Theobald's Cabinet of Chemistry. They produced fine colour-effects, clouds of pungent smoke, and a smell (which is not the word boys use) never to be forgotten. Finally came the days of real fireworks; among the smaller items, squibs, crackers, catherine wheels, and "Golden Rain"; better still were the Roman candles—was there some connection of Guy Fawkes Day with Popery in that name?—and, supremely best, the rockets, which said "wwhoooo!" and soared into the night, while the sticks fell crash into the cucumber frames. The pleasure of buying them, and carrying them out into the darkness, and putting a light to the touch-paper, far surpassed that of merely looking on at the most elaborate "pyrotechnic

displays " of the Crystal Palace. Was it wonderful that all boys, and most girls, desired earnestly to remember the Fifth of November ? With the origin of the festival they had not the least concern. They were conscious of not the slightest animosity—or, indeed, of any other feeling—towards the Pope. What did concern them was that fireworks, vetoed at other seasons, became lawful on this day of the year. The young gentlemen of Oxford and Cambridge kept the anniversary in another way—by indulging in fisticuffs with the town. Calverley celebrates the conflict in Macaulayesque stanzas :—

On pinnacled St. Mary's
 Lingers the setting sun ;
 Into the streets the blackguards
 Are skulking one by one :
 Butcher and Boots and Bargeman
 Lay pipe and pewter down ;
 And with wild shout come tumbling out
 To join the Town and Gown.

And now the undergraduates
 Come forth by twos and threes,
 From the broad tower of Trinity,
 From the green gate of Caius—

and do so still, in point of fact, though in these days the " Fifth " is observed by a cheerful " rag " rather than by the quite serious conflict of a more warlike age.



I suppose none of us are sorry that the " religious observances," as they were termed (there was un-

commonly little religion about them, but plenty of politics), which once were thought necessary on Guy Fawkes Day have disappeared. But it was not until 1859, I think, that the use of the Prayer Book service for November 5 was abrogated. If you will turn to it in an old Prayer Book you will find that it contains some extraordinarily strong language, not easy to reconcile with the spirit of Christian charity. There was more of this, no less violent, in the form for use on January 30, the anniversary of Charles I's execution. We cannot wish to use phrases like "bloodthirsty enemies," "Popish treachery," and "hellish malice" in our prayers. But long after papal aggression had ceased to have any real danger for the country, these services were popular as political demonstrations. Each was, so to speak, a set-off against the other. On January 30 the Tories extolled the sacredness of the Crown ; on November 5 the Whigs emphasised the sacredness of Parliament. Even the two collects for the King in the Communion Office (though both had been composed in 1549) were labelled Whig and Tory. The Tory "High Churchman" used the first—"that we, duly considering whose authority he hath, may humbly obey him"—which was supposed to teach, more or less, the divine right of kings. The Whig parson recited the second—"may study to preserve thy people"—which was interpreted as a wholesome reminder that the king, so far from being absolute,

could only justify his existence by proving himself of service to the nation. From time to time some special event—such as the Titus Oates scare of 1678—would revive the first significance of Guy Fawkes Day. But its observance tended increasingly to become a political rather than an anti-papal demonstration.



Let us put ourselves back a couple of centuries. The date, then, is November 5, 1712. Queen Anne is upon the throne ; the Tories, led by Harley and St. John, came into office two years ago. At their bidding the war has languished ; next year the lengthy peace negotiations will be consummated by the Treaty of Utrecht. That extraordinarily industrious Mr. Defoe is still producing his "Review" twice a week, writing every word of it himself, as he has done for some eight years past. Do you read the "Examiner" ? Doubtless you know that Dean Swift took it over last year ; its tone is vastly more severe and caustic than when Matt. Prior was the writer. But Master Matthew is at the Embassy in Paris nowadays. Of course, you have your "Spectator" every morning. There's a new poet, by the way, that is well spoken of ; his "Essay on Criticism," printed last year, was much applauded by the wits. But these are no fit topics for the Fifth of November ; as pious

Englishmen, we must to church. A sermon, as usual, is to be preached before the Peers in Westminster Abbey; the House of Commons will attend the Church of St. Margaret, hard by; my Lord Mayor and Aldermen will be at the service in St. Paul's. Shall we join them? The preacher at St. Paul's is the Reverend Mr. Sherlock; he has succeeded his father, you'll remember, as Master of the Temple, and the father was Dean of St. Paul's when he died, five years ago. Yes, as you say, that little incident of his writing an eloquent defence of the non-jurors one year, and an equally convincing attack upon them the next make honest folk look askance at William Sherlock. But it is his son Thomas whom we shall hear this morning, a clever young man, standing high in Her Majesty's favour. . . . You are surprised that the church is so full? Well, you will observe that each lady, thanks to her hoops, occupies a considerable space; her "skirts are blown up into the most enormous concave," as Mr. Spectator has remarked. Further, the public has not forgotten the November 5 sermon of three years ago—or the pother which followed. Dr. Sacheverell, between ourselves, has uncommonly little merit as a preacher, and the Whigs did him the best possible service—and themselves the worst, as their speedy fall proved—by taking serious notice of his empty-headed rhetoric. . . . But Dr. Sherlock has mounted the pulpit. His text is: "Wilt

Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them ? ”



I think we will skip back again to the twentieth century. You do not want to hear Dr. Sherlock's sermon ; I can assure you, having read every word of it, that it is not remarkable. My Lord Mayor and the Aldermen must have yawned dreadfully long before the close. Its theme is the relation between civil and ecclesiastical discipline, but the preacher is so cautious, and qualifies each statement so carefully, that the end finds one not much wiser as to his views than the beginning. Only upon one point is he quite explicit, and that is in his fulsome praise of the Queen. Here lay the path to promotion ; under Anne and George I the obsequious Sherlock became Master of the Temple, Dean of Chichester, Bishop of Bangor, Bishop of Salisbury, and Bishop of London. Bound up in the volume where I found his sermon are seventeen others, by various hands, mostly delivered on November 5 or January 30. The most amusing (if you will pardon the adjective) is one preached by Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury—that thorough-going Erastian—on November 5, 1710. His text is “ Happy are the people that are in such a case,” and the arguments deduced from it are, first, that the English people ought to consider

themselves supremely happy ; secondly, that they owe every bit of their happiness—including, apparently, "a numerous, healthy, increasing, and lovely race," "fruitful sheep and strong cattle," and the fact that "it is half an age since we had any Infection in the Air"—to the State. He is furious with those ill-conditioned wretches who dare to grumble : "Shall our eye be evil," he exclaims in a startling paraphrase, "because the Government is good ?"



But all polemics, political as well as religious, had vanished from the observance of Guy Fawkes Day as you and I remember it. *We* didn't trouble ourselves about Whig or Tory, or Pope or Archbishop ; rockets and a jolly bonfire were what we cared for. It was a day, too, when plenty of grown-ups—schoolmasters, sober City men, and others—could put aside their solemnity, and confess without shame that the schoolboy love of fireworks was alive in them yet. Well, that time seems to have gone. In a few towns where the observance still lingers it has become degraded to the rowdiness of a senseless mob. And you can't organise the proper Fifth of November spirit ; it has to be spontaneous, the natural effervescence of boys of all ages. The only mention one can find of the day in these times is in a magazine article written to show that the whole story is a myth, that there

never was any real Gunpowder Plot at all. . . . Yet—I'm not sure. Possibly our modern youth is not wholly degenerate. . . . On the outskirts of this town is a little shop, the window of which I never pass without an eager scrutiny. It is not the wares commonly exposed for sale which allure me; these seem to be mostly potatoes, eggs, brilliant packets of flower-seed, and kippered herrings. The real charm of the window is to be found in the pen-and-ink notices whereby the proprietor calls attention to any "special line," as the catalogues of more ambitious traders phrase it. The first which caught my eye, a long time ago, was "Fouls supplied to order"—exactly the motto, you perceive, for a modern football club. Ever since I have taken care to read the announcements in that window. And to-day, though November 5 is yet some weeks ahead, it proclaims: "Fire Works Within!" O rapture! How delightful to plunge "Within," to purchase wildly every kind of "Fire Work"—squibs, Roman candles, crackers, everything! But I daren't. I simply daren't. Goodness knows what the neighbours would say, and the public in general, and the policeman in particular. (The country parson has an advantage over the townsman which I never realised till now; he can let off fireworks in his garden.) But that shopkeeper is a gallant man. He is helping to keep alive a noble tradition—a tradition of cheerful blazes and explosions. He is handing

on the torch—or the rocket—to the young generation. He, at any rate, is pleased to remember the Fifth of November ; he sees no reason why Gunpowder Treason should ever be forgot. And, heart and soul, I am with him.

Education—From a Distance

IT was the custom of the ingenious Mr. Addison when writing his papers for the "Spectator" to sign each with one of the letters forming the word "Clio." Thereby, the critics tell us, he made no allusion to the Muse of History. His desire was to acquaint his friends, possessed of the cipher's key, where each essay had been fashioned. Thus, did they find an O at the end of a sheet they became aware that it had been penned in the publisher's Office; an I gave proof that the rural shades of Islington were its birthplace. Not without cause, we may suppose, did this fastidious essayist take pains to reveal a detail so personal. He felt that they whose judgment touched him most nearly must know the local circumstance of each paper to value rightly its character, its argument, its point of view. The whole attitude toward life of him who scribbled in the bustling office, or sanded his hasty sheets amid coffee-house babble, must differ from that of him—though the man, indeed, were the same—who pieced together his phrases as he wandered solitary through green fields. If modern writers were to follow the

example of Mr. Addison we should know the better with how many grains—or ounces—of salt to season, ere swallowing, their verdicts. Many an acrid dramatic criticism, we may believe, has been born of an uncomfortable seat, a draughty theatre, or a missing of the last train home. Send your fierce politician on a golfing holiday, give him a fine day, a good course, a pleasant partner, and the luck of holing three long putts in succession, and you will find him ready to concede that the other fellows, his political opponents, are not quite dastardly scoundrels, after all. It would be illuminating, again, were a review to end with a hieroglyph signifying “written just before paying a visit to my dentist,” or another meaning “written in the novelist’s country-house, where I am spending a delightful ten days.” Wordsworth, you will remember, gave titles of this kind to some of his poems, describing the environment which inspired them. We look coldly at some dismal sonnet of pessimism; more leniently should we judge it under the explanatory statement: “written during a rough passage between Calais and Dover,” or “composed at Clapham Junction Station in an east wind while waiting for a very late train.”



It seems well to explain, therefore, that these words are being set down in a remote corner of the

West Highlands. There is no railway within twenty miles. The daily mail—not the Largest Circulation, but one's letters—is brought by steamer. But the landing-stage is four or five miles from the house. The postman disapproves of heavy loads. Therefore he has a little lock-up shed at the landing-stage; in this, if he is so minded, he stores a portion of the letters for a day or two, delivering the rest. Time scarcely exists here. You can wander throughout a day and see no human being; you can survey the country for miles and discern only loch and heather, mountain and wood, without one house, without one scrap of cultivated ground. So here one spends long peaceful days, fishing and meditating. (If you try to do both these things at once you miss the fish as he rises at you, and then you try to persuade yourself that he was "coming short.") You meditate on many things; on the philosophy of the Absolute, also on the advisability of trying a Zulu as your tail-fly, also on the education question, also on the horrid fury of the midges. And all these things seem, in a sense, equally important, or unimportant. The "Times" arrives two or three days after publication, at the postman's pleasure. But you have a feeling that the events it records do not really matter. I am mildly regretful if the British Empire is to be cozened over this Panama Canal business, but I am grieved far more acutely by the remembrance of that big fish which, played

for a considerable time this morning, broke me at the end.



However, we will not discuss either the meaning of the Absolute or that nefarious President Taft in these pages. But I insist (and to this, in fact, I have been decoying you since the beginning of this paper) upon a few remarks concerning the education question. You protest fiercely. You say that you are sick to death of Parents' leagues, and "facilities" and the Cowper-Temple clause, and so forth. Well, I promise to say not one word about them. It is in quite a different way that I reflected upon our system of elementary education as I sat beside the loch. You urge that while in the Highlands one should not think of it in any way. That I did so was not my fault. The casual postman brought me one of those bulky packages from our County Education Committee for which the ratepayers have the privilege of paying. *Imprimis*, the minutes of our last meeting, a stout printed booklet, bound in green. *Item*, other "County Council Minutes relating to education." *Item*, the reports of the Finance Committee, the Sanitary Committee, the General Purposes Committee, and several more, each a printed pamphlet. They abound with statistics, tables, and estimates which must have taken many clerks much time to prepare. And all this bundle represents but a tiny fraction of our gigantic

educational machinery. Each county and borough authority is doing its work, I suppose, more or less on the same prodigal scale. They employ a vast army of salaried officials. Then there are the inspectors, and the assistant-inspectors, the medical officers, the diocesan education boards, and, in the background, those wonderful people at Whitehall who beg to acknowledge your communication of the 1st ult. and have the honour to remain your obedient servants. When other diversions fail, they content themselves with returning Form Nine, that wondrous document, to bewildered managers. Altogether, our system of elementary education costs us I know not how many millions a year. An enormous amount of unpaid labour is also expended in the same cause by school managers and members of County Councils and innumerable other committees. Tommy and Mary must have ten feet of floor space apiece, and "hoppered" windows at their left hand, and a coat-peg at precisely the right height; also they must be weighed and measured and their health worked out in printed tables to the decimal of a measle. Our County Council publishes reams of such figures; possibly someone reads them. Also there are interminable conferences to discuss what Tommy and Mary shall be taught and how they shall be taught it; every year some new subject seems to be added to the syllabus. Here, then, is this gigantic, complex, and costly system,

and the result of it all, viewed with calm detachment, is a ghastly failure.



Of course you do not realise this when you are in the thick of things, when, for instance, you visit an elementary school. There is a cheerful buzz of industry; the children look well and happy, the teachers, as a whole, are wonderfully good. Nor do you see things in the right perspective at educational committees. I happen to be chairman of three and a member of some half a dozen more, and the work which we do generally seems interesting and well worth while. Again, while I doubt if all the fuss about floor-space and the like really makes any difference to the health of Tommy and Mary, by all means let us give them every chance. But the real test of education is its lasting effect upon those who have left school. The true way of learning what our expenditure of millions and our elaborate organisation have done for Tommy and Mary is to examine them, not while they are in the Fifth or Sixth Standard, but when, let us say, they have reached the age of twenty-three. Now the theory of any education worth the name is that it (*a*) trains character, (*b*) makes intelligent citizens, (*c*) prepares for earning a livelihood. Now kindly consider our Tommy *ætat.* twenty-three. He may be a healthy and excellent young man, he may be an utter wastrel.

If he be the latter, our educational system must take a large share of the blame ; but if he be the former, how much of the result can we honestly claim for his schooling ? We will not discuss his religion beyond remarking that the “ Church teaching ” given in a considerable proportion of our Church schools is worth uncommonly little. If he has learnt discipline and *esprit de corps*, that is far more probably due to membership in the C.L.B. or the Scouts than to any school influence. Again, he is supposed to be a capable citizen ; probably he has a vote. To learn the actual reasons guiding him in his use of it is apt to be a bewildering experience. At the age of thirteen he had probably a fair knowledge of English history. At the age of twenty-three he has forgotten everything. Finally, his schooling has probably done little or nothing to put him in the way of earning good wages. Or summarise the issue in another way. Every year we add to the already huge expenditure on elementary education. Look at the collective product. Look, for instance, at the crowd pouring through the gates to witness a football match. Are you prepared to say that we are getting value for our money ?



As for the main fault of our system, that is obvious enough. Precisely at the age when a boy is able to begin learning, in any full sense, we allow

him to leave school. The boys of the wealthier classes attend what are rightly termed "preparatory" schools up to the age of thirteen. Then their real education begins. Every year between fourteen and nineteen is of increasing value; the boy who spends five years at a public school learns, from every point of view, in his last year more than in the previous four put together. With the working-classes we take enormous pains and spend money without stint until a boy comes to the age when he is truly capable of learning. Then the system, save for a comparatively few "continuation" classes at the fag-end of a day, comes to an abrupt stop. Tommy, if he is a rustic, does odd jobs about a farm. If he lives in a town, he is hired to "run errands"—though, in point of fact, the errand-boy does not run, he loafs. As for Mary, she is sent out to do domestic work far beyond the physical strength of a child of fourteen, or she is kept at home to act as nurserymaid to the younger children. Just when Tommy and Mary could really learn they cease to be taught. Just when they really need the strongest moral help and discipline these are withdrawn. All the public money and pains spent on their schooling up to the age of fourteen is almost wasted. The whole system is unsound and bad through and through. Somehow or other any State which is to fulfil its obligations and train good citizens must make school attendance compulsory up to the age of

nineteen. Yes, there are a thousand economic and other difficulties in the way. How they are to be overcome I cannot tell you ; but it is the business of the State to overcome them. Our existing system of educating the working-classes is a sham, a delusion, a fraud. Of course, as things are we must make the best of it ; but the whole " education question " needs a far more thorough treatment than either politicians or " educationalists " imagine. Let them go away and ponder the problem by the shores of a Highland loch.



Well, the air grows chill, and I don't think there will be any further rise to-night. Let us take down the rods and tramp home. The great hills in the distance have lost their heather-purple, standing dark and clear-cut against the evening sky. The chattering rivulets seem to speak more clearly and busily in the tranquil stillness. Over all the wide landscape a deep peace broods, a dim mystic sense of the eternal. Here you and I do our trivial little things with a vast amount of fuss and pother ; we raise our shrill voices in querulous protest because this happening or that is hard to understand ; we squabble and put violence upon our brotherhood . . . yet, with all our failings, we do desire the better things ; and in the serene evening sometimes we can hear the gentle whisper, we feel the infinitely patient, calm, wise smile of Him Who made, and sustains, and understands.

The Fairyland Supplies Store

I PAUSED in my walk down the street, for a bookseller's window always brings me to a standstill. It contained much besides books, indeed; but this is usual enough in our days, when the struggling bookseller must needs rely on "the fancy trade" for most of his profit. And, though it was the row of volumes which drew my gaze, I think I should have halted to examine the window in any case, being possessed by an odd feeling that, familiar as the street was, I had not seen this shop before. Perhaps it had but just been opened. . . . As I looked, the title on the back of a stout eighteenth-century quarto caught my eye, and made me hasten, laughing aloud, into the shop. The stout gentleman with gold spectacles was evidently the proprietor, and to him I addressed myself.

"Excuse me," I said; "I have not really come to buy anything at the moment, but one of the books in your window—that old quarto on the left side—has its title so deliciously misprinted that I couldn't help noticing it and calling your attention to it."

The old gentleman leaned over the partition at

the back of the window, drew out the volume, held it close to his spectacles, read aloud the title, and then turned to me with dignified surprise. "I fail, sir, to detect any error," he remarked.

To think that a bookseller could be so illiterate ! "But, but," I gasped, "surely you must know ! 'The Life of James Boswell, Esquire, by Dr. Samuel Johnson !' What wouldn't one give for it ! Don't you see that the printer has transposed the subject and the author of the biography ? It's the finest mistake I've met for years."

"Sir," said the proprietor gravely, "I fancy that the mistake is *yours*. Do you, by any chance, imagine that this is an ordinary shop ? Did you notice our title over the doorway as you came in ? . . . Ah, I thought not. Permit me to hand you one of our business cards." He did so. It bore the inscription : "The Fairyland Supplies Store. Christmas presents in great variety. No better value to be obtained for your wishes anywhere. Puck, Managing Director." I looked again at the stout, elderly gentleman. "Yes," he said, interpreting my glance, "I am Mr. Puck, and the business, in point of fact, is mine—though 'managing director' sounds well, you know. Possibly you associate me with pictures taken in my early days, when I did a certain amount of gambolling, and frolicking, and all that, attired—er, suitably for such occupations. But I've settled down to

business now. And how about your Christmas presents? What can I supply you with?"

"If that's *really* a Life of Boswell by Dr. Johnson," I began, feeling still, as my readers would have done, rather sceptical——

"Really? Why, of course it is. Everything on our premises is guaranteed genuine."

"And the price?" I ventured.

"Everything in the shop costs just the same—one wish."

"Do you mean," I inquired, "that I can take anything I like by just wishing for it?"

"Certainly; only remember that you're not allowed more than three wishes in all. If you haven't quite forgotten every fairy tale you read, you must know that much. So you had better take a good look round before making your choice. If by any miscalculation you *should* break the rule and utter a fourth wish, its only effect would be to transform you instantly into a black toad. It's positively depressing, I assure you, when sometimes by the end of a busy morning one sees a dozen customers hopping about the floor.

"Well, we may as well begin with books, as you're fond of them. Our speciality, of course, is that we stock things you couldn't obtain elsewhere. That 'Johnson's Life of Boswell' is one of our 'The Other Side of the Picture' series—very popular just now. Here are some companion

volumes: 'Plain Words about Socrates, by Mrs. Xantippe.' 'A Criticism of Lord Macaulay's Essays, by Robert Montgomery.' And here's another—'Mrs. Pepys' Diary.'"

"I should like to look at that," I said.

"Ah, now you've used up one of your wishes!"

This was annoying. However, I picked up the volume and began to read: "18th. This day my husband to Court in his new clothes, which he supposes to become him mightily. But, Lord! to see the poor fool strut forth! I did near do myself a hurt with laughing. A friend with him to dinner, without my leave, wherefore they did have but cold mutton, and that ill-done. Mr. P. much out of humour thereat, and did betake himself to writing in his diary, whereof the poor wretch knows not that I have the key. So to——"

"Come, come, sir," interrupted Mr. Puck, "you must say you wish for that book if you want to read it. But you've used up one wish already, so you had better look at some of our other volumes before you decide. Here, for instance, is something that may attract you—the full-length autobiography of an author who took a creditable interest in me—I mean, Mr. Shakespeare. There's a chapter in it about his conception of 'Hamlet,' and another explaining who 'Mr. W. H.,' of the sonnet dedication, actually was. Or do you fancy 'The Slave-driver: A Plea for Liberty,' written by Milton's daughter? 'Talks at the Mermaid Tavern,' by Ben

Jonson, is a work that many people would like to have, and so is Addison's 'Richard Steele as I knew Him'—though he *is* a bit hard on poor Dicky.

"If you care for novels, I think 'The Squire of Auburn,' by Oliver Goldsmith, would interest you—personally, I consider it's far ahead of his 'Vicar of Wakefield.' Just at this time of year you should read the chapter describing Christmas at Auburn Hall. How Dickens would have revelled in it! Talking of Dickens, let me call your attention to our edition of 'Edwin Drood.'"

"But that's not a new book," I objected.

"Don't you remember that Dickens left it unfinished, and that people have argued ever since about its ending? Our edition contains the missing chapters, supplied by Mr. Dickens himself. In the same way, we can offer you a complete 'Weir of Hermiston.' Of course, you can have something absolutely new, if you want it. If you'd like a present for a friend interested in foreign affairs, let me recommend 'My Private Opinions on European Politics,' by the German Emperor."

"I really don't know *what* to take," I sighed. "Isn't there any way of getting round that rule of yours? Supposing, for instance, I included half a dozen volumes in one wish, what would happen?"

"A black toad would happen," said the proprietor solemnly, "and *you* would be that black toad. Let me beg you not to take liberties of the

kind. But now I want to show you some of our other goods—for we're not limited to books, you know. We stock a great variety of useful articles, all sent direct from our factory in Fairyland."

"I wish you would show me a Travelling Carpet," said I, remembering my "Arabian Nights," and thinking how very useful such a carpet would be in these days of railway and taxi strikes.

"There is one hanging in that corner," said Mr. Puck, pointing to it as he spoke. "But in that last sentence of yours you frittered away another wish—so that you've only one left! Do, please, be careful about it. Now, here's a little invention particularly useful to literary men who are inclined to be absent-minded. May I ask if you ever—er, disregard the salutations of ladies whom you ought to recognise?"

"Often," I admitted. "In fact, I believe I rarely walk down a street without cutting somebody—without the least intention of doing so."

"Precisely. Then this article is just what you need. It is as thin as a visiting-card, you see, and slips easily into the lining of your hat. It has two parts—a receiver and an elevator. When a lady bows in your direction, the action causes waves to impinge on the receiver. Immediately the elevator gives out a corresponding current, which causes your hat to rise in the air, to execute a graceful bow, and then to return to your head. So you can walk about thinking as hard as you

please, without troubling to notice other people. Your reputation for courtesy will be quite safe ; our little machine will look after that."

"I wish—I mean, I think, I must certainly have one," I said. "And what is that thing next to it on the counter, like a miniature gramophone?"

"That is also an excellent invention—in fact, it should be used in conjunction with our bowing machine. It is, as you say, rather like a gramophone, but it's small enough to go in your pocket, and it acts automatically. There are some people, as you probably know, who are not content with bowing when they meet you. They insist upon stopping to talk commonplaces. Now this machine at once utters an appropriate reply to almost any remark they make. Think, too, how useful you would find it at a party ! No need to search for small-talk, you see. You can go on composing poems, or working out problems, or what you will. The machine conducts your conversation. You shall see how it works. Look, I put it in my pocket and turn the key. Now suppose you have met me in the street, and begin to talk. . . . Come on, say something !"

"It's a fine day," I remarked.

"Beautiful, beautiful !" squeaked the machine from the depths of Mr. Puck's pocket. "What charming weather we have had lately, have we not ? Indeed, yes !"

"It looks as if we should have more strikes presently," I went on.

"Truly, truly!" replied the machine. "We live in anxious times, do we not? Things are different now from what they once were. And the future is likely, I am sure, to be different from the past. So glad to have met you. *Good-bye!*"

"There!" said Mr. Puck triumphantly. "What do you think of that?"

"It's a little—a little fatuous," I ventured to observe.

"A little! It's *absolutely* fatuous, my dear sir. Did you ever hear small-talk that wasn't? That's what makes the machine so valuable. For rich, undiluted fatuity, there's nothing in the market to touch it. Of course, we can vary the sentences slightly to suit our customers. For instance, if you had started on politics, the machine would have answered, 'Yes, and what a mischievous politician that unscrupulous fellow So-and-so is!' But instead of 'So-and-so' we insert, before sending out the machine, any name you like."

"Or dislike," I suggested. "What's that thing over there? Some sort of a vacuum-cleaner?"

"Ah, that's our automatic reader—most valuable for literary men, especially if they happen to be reviewers. Supposing you're asked to write a notice of Professor Gruncher's 'History of Universal Philosophy.' To read it through would mean a fortnight's hard work. The machine saves you

all trouble. You simply place the sucker, at that end, against the book, rest the other end of the tube against your head, and get someone to turn the handle ten times. Immediately the whole contents of Gruncher's work are lodged in your brain. How does that idea strike you ? ”

“ I don't like it at all,” I replied. “ It might work all right supposing one was never going to read anything else, but I don't want my head permanently stocked with Gruncher. And by the time you had repeated the process with half a dozen books, surely the strongest brain would give way.”

“ Really, you might credit us with a little more sense,” said the proprietor, rather testily. “ Who proposed to leave Gruncher in your brain after you'd done with him ? No ; when he's been pumped in, you write your brilliant and singularly well-informed review. If you're wise, you won't unload till you have corrected the proof of your article. But then you use our machine in the reverse way ; the sucker, this time, is applied to your head, the handle is turned—and every word of that pompous and dull book is immediately forgotten ! Well, time is getting on, and you've only one wish. Will you have the Shakespeare autobiography, or the small-talker, or the reading-machine, or what ? ”

“ Really, I hardly know ! ” I sighed. “ It's frightfully difficult to choose. By the way, you

have an automatic reading-machine—have you a writing-machine of the same kind ? Something, I mean, that would do my work for me while I just sat about ? I wish,” I added, thinking of a peremptory post card from an Editor, “I wish that essay on Christmas presents was done !”

. . . I suppose the wish was immediately granted. Anyhow, it's sober truth that I'm back here in my study, with a pile of typed pages before me. And if you don't like the result, you must blame Mr. Puck.

Words

WHEN Mrs. Malaprop set "a nice derangement of epitaphs" among the things essential to education, unquestionably she preached sound doctrine, however her practice fell short of it. The arrangement of epithets, the choice of words, is an art too little fostered by the polite academies of our day. Our modern Miss Lydia Languish and her brother are taught "English Composition" and compelled to fashion a large number of "essays" before they leave school. Samuel Johnson, himself an essayist voluble and voluminous, defined the essay, rather oddly, as "a loose sally of the mind; an irregular, indigested piece"; thus might speak the pedagogue, a stack of school "compositions" before him. Lately the head masters of our public schools have been in council over this part of their business, being eager "to encourage the acquirement of a sound English style" among their pupils. "A sound English style" is no light thing to "acquire"; not always (let us whisper) is the head master himself its easy possessor. Mrs. Malaprop's hint may be of profit to him. It is the "nice derangement of epitaphs" which should

be his prime care as a teacher of English prose-writing; the construction of sentences—with which alone his lesson is apt to be concerned—is futile when the art which should be antecedent to it has been ignored. That art, as Mrs. Malaprop wished to show, is the fit choice of words. Obedience to the grammarian's rule, cadence and just emphasis in each sentence, the welding of sentences into shapely paragraphs, are details of his craftsmanship which every writer must be at pains to learn. Yet arrangement, however skilful, of words will not redeem him from failure if he shall have chosen the wrong words to arrange. And to this first knowledge, to a sense of the “values,” as painters say, of words, to a sharp discrimination between the worthy and the unworthy, our modern tuition seldom leads. The case is as if one knew how to arrange a picture gallery to the best advantage, and could light and drape it with fine skill, yet were so foolish as to place a jumble of daubs and Old Masters upon the wall.



We may discern three kinds of English prose in use to-day. Everyone will see that there are two; that there is a gulf (and a widening gulf) between the idiom of our writings and the idiom of our unpremeditated speech. Not always did a chasm lie between the two; so late, for example, as Dr.

Johnson's time the vocabulary employed in conversation does not seem to have been far other than that employed in literature. To-day, if you will listen to the chance talk of people (let us suppose) in a train, and set it beside the English of the book or newspaper on your knees, you cannot but be sensible of the contrast. Then carry further your observation, and you will note two styles—more exactly, two classes of style—in the idiom of literature. (Two classes of style, I say, because the mode of no one author can be quite identical with that of another.) The first is that of writers who pick with care their words; the second is that of writers heedful only of their sentences. So long as the period runs smoothly, they are not scrupulous over its ingredients. Indeed, they attain smoothness of a false type, and spare themselves toil, by recurrent catch-words, phrases long since outworn, quotations—as they themselves would write—which should be “relegated into obscurity,” there to “enjoy a well-earned repose.” They assure us that a book will “repay perusal,” that it is well calculated to beguile the “tedium of a railway journey,” that it is “convincing,” and “a veritable *tour de force*,” that this or another quality is “conspicuous by its absence,” that on a wet day “the climatic conditions were the reverse of favourable,” that Mr. Asquith is “impaled on the horns of a dilemma,” or has been “accorded a phenomenal ova-

tion," or "elicited frequent applause" by a speech which "brought down the house." It is the facile use of the trite word and phrase which the school-master should blame beyond weak grammar or false spelling. These can be amended. But not easily will you liberate that writer who in youth has become servile to the hackneyed phrase. This afternoon I have been looking through examination papers on Shakespeare's "Tempest." The writer of one of them dislikes the character of Gonzalo: "Gonzalo," says she, "one wants to kick." I do not defend the sentiment; indeed, it has been duly marked with horrified red ink. Despite its truculence, however, I prefer it to "Gonzalo is an individual palpably deficient in spontaneity," or any such bad and borrowed phrase.



"The mind of man," writes Professor Raleigh in his enlightening essay on "Style," "is peopled, like some silent city, with a sleeping company of reminiscences, associations, impressions, attitudes, emotions, to be awakened into fierce activity at the touch of words." To this, to "the touch of words," we must needs be sensitive if we are to write well, or even to read great literature with a just appreciation. The unspoilt young come readily beneath its power; the word-magic avails even when the significance of the words is dimly appre-

hended, or wholly hid. In "Father and Son" Mr. Gosse recalls the intense feeling stirred in him by the surge of the Homeric hexameters, read aloud by his father to a boy who knew no Greek. And many a rascal at school has felt the allurements of the Virgilian cadence, has felt the indefinable charm of such a line as :

Formosam resonare doces Amaryllida sylvam.

Indeed, the schoolboy's alertness for words is variously shown. At times some new-coined epithet will please his ear ; within two days it will figure continually in the speech of the whole school. Let one of his masters have a pet word of his own—as Mr. Burchell said "Fudge !" and Dominie Sampson "Prodigious !"—and immediately his pupils will note and reproduce it ; Mr. Kipling's "Stalky," false as it rings in much else, depicts this trait of school life with full truth. How apposite, again, how diabolically apposite, are the nicknames wherewith schoolboys—and school-girls—label their revered preceptors ! Their slang, too, is excellently vivid. When Master Jones kindly describes for me his new form-master, he does not say that the gentleman is a strict disciplinarian, and so forth ; succinctly he remarks that X is "a holy terror"—and the picture is complete. Did I attempt to describe Y, I should be driven to own that he showed some lack of breeding, and that his personality was not alto-

gether prepossessing, though doubtless . . . “Who’s that you’re talking about ?” says Jones ; “old Y ? Oh, Y’s an absolute stinker.” Quite Rabelaisian, no doubt, and Jones ought to be whacked for speaking thus of an elder. But here, patent beyond denial, is my laboured periphrasis reduced to two clear-cut words.



To the young, then, the “touch of words” is a potent force, and direly culpable is he who, under the pretext of teaching “English composition,” atrophies the sense—wilfully encourages the young to use base phrases ready coined, to write shoddy journalese. Much do we lose if the touch of words thrill us not, if we grow insensible to this, perhaps the chief spell which poetry commands. You may not admire Milton’s version of the Fall, you may condemn his theology, but you cannot withstand the word-magic of :

He spake ; and to confirm his words, out-flew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty cherubim ; the sudden blaze
Far round illumined hell ; highly they raged
Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms
Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,

or the supreme word-artistry of Shakespeare, as when he describes the nuns :

Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon,
or of Keats, or—less often, alas !—of some modern

poet. This sestet from one of Mr. William Watson's sonnets has the true touch :—

And I beheld the waters in their might
Writhe as a dragon by some great spell curbed
And foiled ; and one lone sail ; and over me
The everlasting taciturnity ;
The august, inhospitable, inhuman night,
Glittering magnificently unperturbed.

There is no need to insist here upon the beauty of the English Bible, or the superb rhythm of the Prayer Book collects. Macaulay ranked the Preface and Sanctus of our Liturgy as the stateliest prose in the English language. But, as each single note of the scale has its own pure tone-colour for the musician, so each separate word should stand apart, with its own precise shade of meaning, for the author. Therefore he who would write well, or read with the best pleasure, learns to look with care upon each word ; he is sensitive to fine degrees of meaning ; he is aware that of "synonyms" in point of fact, there are none. He is catholic in his welcome, loving alike the sonorous Latinism and the crisp, plain Saxon ; he knows—Shakespeare has taught him—with what effect they may be conjoined :—

The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

He feels how the very sound of such a word as "undulating" brings a view of the scene it describes ; he hears the sharp hammer-tap of

fate on the second syllable of "inexorable"; he is moved by the touch of words.



To value words aright it is well to know something of their ancestry. Those of us who have both small knowledge of etymology and small leisure for studying it should be grateful to Professor Weekley, of Nottingham. Lately he has published a little book on "The Romance of Words" (Murray, 3s. 6d.), which is as easy to read as a novel, and far more entertaining than most novels of to-day. You need not any philological learning to enjoy it; it is a collection of curious facts about the language we employ. Let me pilfer just a few from the many hundreds Professor Weekley gives us. "Assegai" occurs in Chaucer. "Juliet," that type of faithful love, is etymologically identical with "jilt." The "daisy" is the "day's eye"—surely he was a poet who hit upon the name. "Bonfire" means "bone-fire": you celebrated a victory by burning the corpses of your foe. Brazil-wood was known long before Brazil; "the Portuguese navigators found large quantities of it in South America, and named the country accordingly." They found also abundance of timber—Latin, "materia"—on an island, which therefore they named "Madeira." To "canter" is to go at the pace of the pilgrims riding to the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury. "Sentry" has no etymo-

logical connection with "sentinel," being a contracted form of "sanctuary." On the other hand, "glamour" is the same word as "grammar"; schoolboys will not easily credit this. The Roman mint was attached to the temple of Juno Moneta—i.e. the "admonisher," from *monere*—and this word was transferred to the building. Hence our word "money"! "Infantry" means a collection of "infants," or juniors; the cavalry was made up of veterans. Many "chapel" people, Professor Weekley remarks, would be shocked to know that *chapel* "means properly the sanctuary in which a saint's relics are deposited. The name was first applied to the chapel in which was preserved the *cape* or cloak of St. Martin of Tours." "Halibut" means "holy butt," the latter word being an old name for flat-fish. . . . But I hope that my readers will buy this entrancing volume; I must not quote further from it. One word of caution should be added: philologists are prone to squabble over derivations; perchance some expert may quarrel with one cited on this page. Then I would have him remember that it is of scant avail to fire his protest at me; let him read Professor Weekley's volume, and then, if he will, train his learned artillery upon that gentleman. In an age less critical, the dictionary-makers were apt to plagiarise each other's work—at times with undue haste. Professor Weekley cites a delightful instance. Dr. Johnson knew not—no

one really knows—the source of the word “curmudgeon.” Some anonymous helper guessed it to be a perversion of *cœur méchant*—“wicked heart.” And the doctor therefore set down in his dictionary: “It is a vitious manner of pronouncing *cœur méchant*, Fr. an unknown correspondent.” In 1775 Dr. Ash published a rival dictionary, and with a rash eye on Johnson’s page, derived “curmudgeon” from “the French *cœur*, unknown, and *méchant*, a correspondent!”



A real love of words, a power of choosing the good from the base, will cause us to write more slowly, but better than before. I am quite sure that many a heartfelt sermon fails of its effect for the reason that its author has borrowed for his purpose the trite phrases, the conventional figures, the familiar form of words which have become the lamentable “common form” of pulpit idiom. Dr. R. W. Dale nobly exhorted the theological students of Yale, U.S.A., upon their duty: “Let me remind you, gentlemen,” he said, “that your language is one of the noblest and most precious parts of that magnificent inheritance which you have received from a great ancestry. You have no more right to injure the national language than to chip a statue or to run a pen-knife through a picture in the national museum. To use words so loosely and inaccurately that

their definite meaning is lost, is to commit an intellectual offence corresponding to that of removing the landmarks of an ancient estate. To prostrate noble words to base uses is as great a wrong to the community as to deface a noble public monument. . . . Let us resolve that we will do nothing to make Shakespeare and Spenser, and Milton and Dryden, Hooker and Howe, and Barrow and Baxter, and Addison and Bolingbroke, and Swift and Burke less intelligible to posterity than they are to ourselves."



And then, perhaps, a Yale student turned to his neighbour in the lecture-room and said, "Gee-whiz! Wal, I reckon that *is* the pink penultimate!"

February the Fourteenth

THEY tell us—the learned iconoclasts tell us—that we have no right to look upon St. Valentine as the patron saint of lovers, and that the rank of “bishop” assigned to him by our Prayer Book Kalendar “is probably a simple error.”¹ He is vaguely to be known as a priest and martyr at Rome, about 270 A.D.—and that is all. “The habit of ‘choosing Valentines,’” they add, “seems to have been a pagan custom, probably connected with the season of the year,” and associated by accident with the 14th of February. Elsewhere it is affirmed that birds are supposed to pair on this day, whence its appropriateness for billers and cooers. Anyhow, the connection, accidental or otherwise, has been felicitous for English lovers who wished to coo in the way usually judged most effective—that is to say, in rhyme. When you asked a fair one to be your Valentine, as you did in the good old days, “mine,” “thine”—

¹ But, since this was written, the learned secretary of the Alcuin Club has sent me a pamphlet to prove that St. Valentine *was* a Bishop, after all.

not to mention “divine” and “repine”—were ready to be woven into your moving strains with the least possible effort. Upon these so simple assonances you rang the changes each 14th of February, in odes possibly addressed annually to the same charmer—and possibly not. In fact, to ask anyone to be your Valentine (in rhymed verse) was the easiest business in the world. Far different would the task have seemed had love-making chanced to be associated with some other saint—had you been compelled, for example, to implore the fair one to become, not your Valentine, but your Gregory or your Swithin. Having said to your “Valentine” (after a number of other syllables), “Be mine,” you added that your tender heart had felt the smart of Cupid’s dart—or words to that effect—and the job was done. You had no need to echo the pathetic lament raised by Mr. Andrew Lang—

To “dove” my fancies flit, and wheel
Like butterflies on banks of thyme.
“Above” ?—or “shove” ?—alas ! I feel
They’re too much used to be sublime.
I scorn with angry pantomime
The thought of “move” (pronounced as *muve*).
Ah, in Apollo’s golden clime
Why, why are rhymes so rare to *Love* ?



But some proof—no, “guerdon” is the right word, I believe—of a more substantial kind than

mere verse had to be bestowed on Valentine's day to prove the sincerity of a lover's affection. Rings, "handkerchers," and gloves seem to have been the gifts chiefly in vogue. And even in the spacious (and tuneful) days of the sixteenth century there appear to have been some gallants at least who, having purchased such articles, were incapable of fashioning the needed rhymes to accompany them. "The chief characteristic of Elizabethan literature," as a young lady assured me in an examination paper at the end of last term, "was that everyone wrote love poems, and nobody meant them"—not, after all, so bad a definition. Some few, however, could not write them—but they could buy them, as easily as the handkerchers, ready-made. About 1596, for instance, was published "*Love Posies*," from which the ingenious swain could select one from many scores of couplets—and palm it off as his own. Most of them have at least the merit of simplicity. Here are a few :—

As true in love
As turtle-dove.

Your mouse am I,
So will I die.

Give him his due
That is so true !

Be true in heart
Till death depart.

That last line, by the way, suggests a note. "To depart" signified, in this old sense, "to separate" ;

the line means "Till death parts us from each other." In an identical sense it figured in the marriage-service—"till death us depart." In 1662, when such a usage of the word had become obsolete, the sentence was changed to "till death us *do part*"; but "till death us depart" is the form in a Prayer Book I have of the year 1642.



"Posies" was followed, some thirty years later, by "Love's Garland," the rhymes of which are slightly more ambitious. And they have headings indicating the kind of gift for which each is suitable, as thus :—

The Posy of a Handkercher from a Young Man to his Love.

Pray take me kindly, Mistress ! Kiss me too !
My master swears he'll do as much for you.

Another sent with a Pair of Bracelets.

Fair as Venus, as Diana
Chaste and pure is my Susanna.

Before you could use the second of these you had, obviously, to fall in love with a young lady called Susanna—or, as an alternative, Joanna—and I am not sure that these names were commonly met with, even in the year 1624, the date of "Love's Garland." On the other hand, you might easily be named Harry, and it was by no means impossible that your fair one was a Rose. In that fortunate event, "Love's Garland" supplied you

both with ready-made compliments, in the following fashion :—

The Posy of a pitiful Lover writ in a Riband Carnation three pennies broad, and wound about a fair Branch of Rosemary ; upon which he wittily plays thus :

Rosemary, Rose, I send to thee
In hope that thou wilt marry me.
Nothing can be sweet, Rose !
More sweeter unto Harry,
Than marry Rose :
Sweeter than this Rosemary.

Somehow the wit does not seem quite to coruscate, does it ?

Then follows :—

The Sweet Reply, in a conceit of the same cut, sent by Rose, with a Vial of Rosewater of her making :

Thy sweet commands again, my sweetest Harry !
My sweet Rosewater for thy sweet Rosemary ;
By which, sweet Hal, sweet Rose doth let thee see
Thy love's as sweet to her as hers to thee.

On the whole, I think Rose has the better of it, though she is too fond of the adjective "sweet." Here is one more example :—

A drooping Lover's Conceit, playing upon the word.

Hard and Heart in sound are near ;
And both within thy breast I fear.

Her Coy and Nipping Reply, in his own Invention.

The sound's as near in Brace and Brass,
In Hose and Horse, in Ace and Ass !

I fancy that the modern young lady's reply to a swain who sent her such lines on the 14th of February (or any other day) would be perhaps less coy, but decidedly more nipping.

And there is a form in which these "posies" linger yet. You may remember the "Bab Ballad," in which Elvira commands her Ferdinand to "find out who it is that writes those lovely cracker mottoes," and the author is discovered in a "gentle pieman." But in truth the lovely cracker mottoes are lineally descended from the "posies" which charmed the public in the days of Elizabeth and James. Who reads cracker mottoes nowadays? you ask. Well, I do, for one. Children don't; what they want are the toys lurking within the cracker—toys, whereas a simpler generation was well content with paper caps, masks, and sun-bonnets. When Master Tom or Miss Jane has brought me a cracker to pull (usually the end comes off, and one is expected to pull the naked explosive strip, which requires prodigious courage) I do not compete for the top or mouth-organ within. The business-like child snatches these, adds them to his store, grabs another cracker, and dashes off to pull it with someone else. My share is the tinsel and paper, which I don't want—and the motto, which I do. Carefully I extract it from the remnants flung so hastily to the ground. Is not the author a man and a brother-bard? Is it fair, is it right to leave unread those lines which he wrought so carefully? Sometimes, indeed, the muse being unpropitious, he sinks to mere prose, and asks me why a postman is like a rhinoceros. More often he obliges with a lyric.

Let me offer you some authentic samples, from this season's crop :—

Ah, little care you, though you break
My heart for mere amusement's sake !

Your name, presumably, being Lady Clara Vere de Vere. And here is the equivalent—the tragic equivalent—of the sixteenth-century “conceit” :—

For money loans I don't apply,
But please to kindly *use-your-eye*.

What, doesn't that make you shout with laughter, split infinitive and all ? Perhaps you prefer the following :—

Charmer, beware ! In quick decay
All joy and beauty fade away,

—which is a really exhilarating thought for a children's Christmas party. But my prize specimen is the following :—

You do not store a humble vow,
Will this be more or banished now ?

No, that is not a misprint. Such are the veritable lines. Will you have the goodness to read them aloud six times over, and then tell me precisely what they mean ? Will the Browning Society—if the Society yet exists—come to the rescue ? Ever since I disinterred the lines from a Christmas cracker last December, they have haunted me with a horrid fascination. I find myself trying them every way :—

You do not vow a humble store,
Will this be banished now or more ?

Again,

Will this be more or humble now
You do not store a banished vow ?

Or

A banished store——

But enough. The mental strain is too great. Let us leave the cracker-motto to the Higher Critics, and return to our consideration of Valentines.



Mr. Samuel Pepys, as will readily be supposed, was a punctilious observer of February 14th, and his Diary throws a good deal of light upon the customs associated with it in the days of Charles the Second. Apparently the first man who saw a lady on the morning of the day could challenge her to be his Valentine, and one year poor Mrs. Pepys remained in bed until quite late "that she might not see the paynters that were at work in gilding my chimney-piece and pictures in my dining-room, whereat," says the unfeeling Mr. Pepys, "I made good sport to myself." But any relative or close friend might walk boldly into the bedroom, and claim the lady as his Valentine before she arose ; more than once, we gather, Mr. and Mrs. Pepys were aroused from their slumbers by the appearance of someone who wished to be first in the field in making Mrs. Pepys his Valentine. But this was an age when monarchs held official receptions in their bedrooms and as they dressed. Mrs. Pepys, however, had more strings than one

to her bow ; she insisted that she must be her husband's Valentine each year, whoever else also might claim her—"which," remarks Mr. Pepys ruefully, "is like to cost me £4 or £5." He escaped, however, when Valentine's Day chanced to fall on a Sunday. Then, to judge from the Diary, the observances were not transferred to another day, but omitted altogether—and Mr. Pepys kept his £4 in his pocket, which "contented him mightily." In later and more frugal days, people took to sending each other printed cards—which, roses, Cupids, and all, did *not* cost £4 apiece—with verses like these printed in gold upon satin :—

Wilt thou be mine, love, mine evermore ?
Darling, I'll cherish thee, love and adore,
Each season recurring fresh gladness shall bring,
Summer, winter, autumn, and spring ;
Answer me quickly, do not delay ;
Answer me kindly, do not say nay.



Well, Valentines are extinct nowadays ; the stationers' windows this month will not be lined with white cardboard boxes containing cards with their roses and doves and transfixed hearts ; the postman will have no extra load to carry on the 14th. Even the other type of Valentine—the vulgar kind—is not to be seen, save possibly in some village shop. (This variety, of course, you sent to your schoolmaster or mistress—and I need not add that the gift was strictly anony-

mous. When the day came, you watched with a fearful joy as they opened their letters at breakfast-time, and drew forth a frightful caricature, with "O, for shame!" or "Yah, you old cat!" or some such kindly greeting printed below it.) That the custom of sending this type has been abandoned is a fact which not the staunchest Tory will bewail. But I am less sure about the total neglect of the other 14th of February customs, whether they were "pagan in their origin" or not. We may grant that the cards, according to modern taste, were ugly, that the verses printed on them were for the most part vapid doggerel. We will admit that the young gentlemen who sent them were apt to be affected and sentimental, that the young ladies who received (and treasured) them blushed and swooned and giggled overmuch. Yet, underneath all the pasteboard trumpery, affectation, and pretence, was something—call it an attitude of mind, or what you will—the loss of which, perhaps, is not a matter for rejoicing. Love-making had a mystic glamour in those days; romance and chivalry were real; marriage a very sacred thing. I don't pretend that the youths and maidens always came up to these ideals, but at least the ideals were there, and had the sanction of public opinion behind them. I am no blind champion of the past; I believe, on the contrary, that in many ways we have improved. But in respect of romance

and chivalry, and wooing and marriage? Well, I won't dogmatise. Observe for yourself the modern young men and young women. Watch their behaviour and manners. Listen to their talk. And then you can form your own opinion. Then you can say whether something more important than any outward custom has, or has not, passed with the passing of the Valentine.

The Bard of Erin

O WHY should the hair of a man in old age, which used to be black, become white, whereas the white sheet of my manuscript page grows blacker each moment I write? Nay, Susan Jane, I will not dare to wander in the forest fair; the distance is at least a mile, besides, the weather's simply vile. Unfortunate country! the alien has fed her with counterfeit articles, worthy the slave; arise, and insist on the genuine Cheddar, and drink to the . . . I beg your pardon. This is not lunacy, as you have begun to fear; it is merely the result of reading Thomas Moore, his works. Here they are, presented anew to a forgetful world by the Oxford University Press. There must be nearly a thousand pieces of verse in this volume, and, by the time one has read two or three hundred, they begin to exercise a hypnotic influence. The reader finds that his own speech is shaping itself into metre, that he drops into verse, like Mr. Wegg. To talk in prose becomes impossible; a bubbling stanza seems the natural vehicle of human speech. Moore himself must have lisped in numbers, and the numbers came; verses on any subject in the world, reeled off with amazing fluency.

Love, roses, gazelles, Erin the fair and unhappy, nightingales, castles, and flowing bowls—such are his favourite themes ; but a political speech, or an invitation to dinner, or a song from the Greek Anthology would serve his turn as well, would set the well-oiled barrel-organ in motion, and give you a copy of verses which seem almost to have made themselves. Never was there so accommodating a bard. Did a lady approach him, album in hand, with a request for some trifle from his pen ? Albums, fortunately, are almost extinct to-day ; yet even now, once in a way, the bard is bidden to write “ just something ” in one of these volumes, and is made miserable for weeks in consequence. But in Moore’s time—and, indeed, for long afterwards—every lady of quality had her album. (One comes across a volume of the kind now and then ; a stout tome, with a lock in the clasp to guard its treasures ; within, little drawings in sepia and pencil, and “ charades,” and extracts from sentimental poets, copied with the finest of pens in the thin, long handwriting taught at Miss Pinkerton’s Academy, together with autographs of such literary folk as the owner could capture.) And of all poets Tommy Moore was the most complaisant towards the album-owner ; without an effort he would turn out a stanza or two about roses and posies ; bowers, flowers, showers ; gleams, streams, and dreams.



The publishers found him equally willing to oblige. When Bungay—which is to say, Murray—was about to produce with great success my Lord Byron's "The Giaour" and "Bride of Abydos," Bacon—which is to say, Longmans—looked round for a rival work. You remember how Thackeray describes their methods: "When Bungay engaged your celebrated friend Mr. Wagg to edit the 'Londoner,' Bacon straightway rushed off and secured Mr. Grindle to give his name to the 'Westminster Magazine.' When Bacon brought out his comic Irish novel of 'Barney Brallagan,' off went Bungay to Dublin, and produced his rollicking Hibernian story of 'Looney Mac-Twolter.' When Doctor Hicks brought out his 'Wanderings in Mesopotamia' under Bacon's auspices, Bungay produced Professor Sadiman's 'Researches in Sahara.'" Well, then, Longmans having noted the success of Murray with Byron's Oriental poems, proceeded to play a rival card. Would Mr. Moore oblige them with a long poem of Eastern life? Mr. Moore—who at this time knew as much about Eastern life as you and I know of Patagonia—would be most happy to do as he was asked. In due time "Lalla Rookh" was the result, and for "Lalla Rookh" Mr. Moore was paid the comfortable sum of three thousand guineas. That is a substantial fact, O brother minor-bard, which it behoves us to ponder. Doesn't it make your mouth water? You may

believe, and I won't contradict you, that your sonnets and blank verse are better than anything Moore ever wrote, but has any volume of them brought you three thousand guineas—or three thousand shillings? I would wager that there is not one British author now alive who has made by all his serious verse a third of the sum which Moore gained by “*Lalla Rookh*” alone. That was indeed the golden age for poets. Even the Rev. George Crabbe, who, though vastly Moore's superior in genius, was never a quite popular bard, obtained £3000 for his “*Tales of the Hall*,” together with the copyrights of some earlier work. And when Longmans bought “*Lalla Rookh*” at the stupendous figure above mentioned, they were acting not as mere philanthropists, but as hard-headed men of business. There is no reason to suppose that they lost by the bargain. Indeed, the poem was prodigiously successful. Even now, while scarcely anyone reads our cultured lyrics, almost everyone is dimly familiar with

There's a bower of roses by Bendemeer's stream,
And the nightingale sings round it all the day long;
In the time of my childhood 'twas like a sweet dream,
To sit in the roses and hear the bird's song.

That, I suppose, represents Moore almost at his best. But why did people love it so? Why has it survived, when thousands of real poems are utterly forgotten? Could not you, or I, or anyone, turn out such stanzas? Let us go on:—

O never a sorrow could moisten the eye,
O never a heart could be heavy with care,
While the nightingale's melody rose to the sky,
And the blossoming bower made fragrant the air.

That bower and music I never forget,
But oft when alone, in the bloom of the year,
I think—is the nightingale singing there yet ?
Are the roses still bright by the calm Bendemeer ?

That second stanza, in point of fact, is mine ; I wrote it in just three minutes by the watch. Is it worse than stanzas one and three, which are Moore's ? And if I write a great many pages of this sort of thing, will Mr. Longman send me his cheque for three thousand guineas ? On the whole, I venture to prefer stanza 2 to stanza 1, for "to sit in the roses" is scarcely, if you come to think of it, a comfortable position. Or take any of the love-poems, of which Moore wrote many hundreds :

Fly from the world, O Bessy, to me,
Thou wilt never find any sincerer ;
I'll give up the world, O Bessy ! for thee,
I can never meet any that's dearer,

and in fact Bessy, whose other name was Dyke, *did* fly to her Thomas, making him an uncommonly good wife. But consider the artlessness of the poetry ! Such were the lyrics beloved of the public one hundred years ago (1811 was the year of Moore's marriage). Of course Moore had his detractors, as every successful man of letters is bound to have. Jeffrey, of the "Edinburgh Review," liked Moore no better than he liked the Lake poets, and ex-

pressed his candid opinion of an early work, the "Odes and Epistles," with considerable vigour. Moore's intrepid soul, however, was not of the kind to "let itself be snuffed out by an article"; on the contrary, he challenged his critic to mortal combat. Just, however, as the principals were posted, and the signal was about to be given, the *deus ex machina* appeared—a posse of constables drove up in a dog-cart, and bloodshed was averted. Byron declared, in later days, that in any case the damage would have been small, since the pistols were loaded with powder alone—for which assertion Moore nearly fought Byron also.



At other times Moore consoled himself for "illiberal criticism," as he termed it, by producing a pathetic lyric, in which he asserted that so long as Julia (or Fanny, or Laura, or some other lady of his innocent poetic harem) appreciated his work, he could afford to scorn his critics.

Why, let the stingless critic chide
With all that fume of vacant pride
Which mantles o'er the pedant fool,
Like vapour on a stagnant pool.
O if the song, to feeling true,
Can please th' elect, the sacred few,
Whose souls, by Taste and Nature taught,
Thrill with the genuine pulse of thought,

—he was completely satisfied. That kind of talk is "common form" among poets; yet when Moore calls his assailant a "pedant fool," one is

tempted to fancy that the critic has been less "stingless" than we are asked to suppose. (Your really erudite commentator might discern a cryptic reference to the unloaded pistols of the duel in the phrase "stingless critic.") The gist of the matter, on the other hand, is that Moore's appeal was not to the "sacred few," but to the secular many. By pleasing no more than the sacred few you are unlikely to earn those thousands of pounds. Apart from the huge price given for the longer poems, Moore's "Irish Songs" alone brought him in a steady £500 a year. The fact is that he hit exactly the taste of his age, and that is the way to make money. He was held to be "romantic" and even "naughty"; yet there was nothing in his works to preclude them from being given to the young ladies who were discouraged, with excellent reason, from reading Byron. Ladies, old as well as young, doted on his effusions, copied them into albums, sang them to harp accompaniment. The poet (or novelist) who contrives to please the feminine public need not trouble about the opinion of the other sex. His financial success is assured.



It is by his "Irish Melodies" that Moore built himself a monument (relatively) more enduring than bronze. How much minor poetry of to-day is remembered a year after it is written? How much will survive a century hence? Yet every-

one has heard of, and many people can quote such lyrics as "The Harp that once through Tara's Halls," "Go where glory waits thee," "O breathe not his name," "The Meeting of the Waters," "Believe me, if all those endearing young charms," "She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps," "And doth not a meeting like this make amends," "The Minstrel Boy to the war has gone," and "The last rose of summer"—every one of which, with scores and scores of others, was written by Thomas Moore.

'Tis the last rose of summer
 Left blooming alone ;
 All her lovely companions
 Are faded and gone ;
 No flower of her kindred,
 No rose-bud is nigh,
 To reflect back her blushes,
 Or give sigh for sigh.

Is that great poetry ? Whence comes its amazingly long life ? You may suggest that the credit is due really to the tune of the song, rather than to the words. But the tune is not a good one in itself, nor is it well suited to the words. Perhaps had he lived to-day Moore would have penned lyrics for "musical comedies." You may remember that dreadful "Honeysuckle and Bee" thing, popular a year or two ago. Did its author steal from Moore ? That poet, anyhow, wrote a duet, the first verse of which is as follows :—

He. What the bee is to the flow'ret,
 When he looks for honey-dew,
 Through the leaves that close embower it,
 That, my love, I'll be to you.

What our Thomas really did best was the writing of political squibs. Many of them were as brilliant as they were venomous, and it is curious to remember that a large proportion of them were printed in the "Times"—a less staid journal in those days. You may remember, in this connection, that Charles Lamb earned a difficult livelihood by contracting to supply the "Morning Post" with six jokes a day, at sixpence per joke. Moore's political satires (to return to our theme) are really first-rate of their kind—better, I think, than any of Praed's or Canning's. Yet it is as the lyricist, not as the satirist, that his fame has survived.



Will the re-issue of his works in the charming form which the Oxford Press has given us increase the number of his admirers? That, on the whole, seems improbable. Much more likely is it that as modern readers turn his pages they will wonder at his vogue, at the repute based upon so trivial a foundation. Yet apart from their intrinsic merit or demerit, to look through his lyrics is a pleasant diversion. They bring vividly before us days long past: days of a simpler taste, days which we may view with an easy scorn and a sense of our own superiority, but which possessed certain good qualities we have lost, and seem too little likely to regain.

A Cause Célèbre

ONE need hardly say that every inch of the court was occupied. The question of making better arrangements when a case of universal interest is down for hearing is one that the authorities have neglected long enough. Seldom has the accommodation proved less adequate than it did yesterday; in fact, the trial of the action "*Spirit of Christmas versus the British Public*" drew a vast assemblage to the Law Courts. So eagerly has this *cause célèbre* been anticipated, that a brief account of the proceedings will prove, we think, of interest to our readers. We need not weary them with the technical jargon of the pleadings; put shortly, this was an application by the *Spirit of Christmas* alleging gross default and insulting conduct on the part of the *British Public*, and asking for an order to compel payment each December of "all that lawful debt, as by immemorial custom established," consisting of "junketings, cheerfulness, good-fellowship, and pious usages," all of which, according to the plaintiff's statement of claim, had been withheld of recent years. The defendant admitted liability, but alleged that the

payment had been made regularly and in full. A rather strange rumour concerning the action—which we give with all reserve—asserts that it was really brought not by the nominal plaintiff, but by certain other individuals, who posed as his champions and acted on his behalf. Certainly it was remarkable that the Spirit of Christmas was absent from the court yesterday, and did not give evidence in support of his case.



Mr. Oldtime, counsel for the plaintiff, briefly stated the nature of the action, and proceeded to call his witnesses. The first to enter the box was Mr. Scribbler, who described himself as a leader-writer on the staff of the "Daily Doleful." He stated that in his opinion the honour formerly paid to the Spirit of Christmas was shamefully neglected in these days. He was in the habit of writing several articles each December to call attention to the fact. These articles appeared in the "Daily Doleful," and everyone admitted that the "Daily Doleful" was omniscient. Cross-examined, he said that this certainly seemed to him conclusive proof. The public must believe what it was told. He did not know whether these articles themselves tended to increase the cheerful gaiety of the season, nor did he care. He did know that they were easy to write, and that his editor welcomed them. He admitted that at other times of the

year he contributed essays on "The Coming Ruin of England," "The Failure of Marriage," and "The General Worthlessness of Everything." That type of article was a special line which he had struck out for himself, and he enjoyed writing it.

Mr. Orlando Parnassus said that he was a poet. He wrote for all the leading magazines. He did not say that he wrote *in* them—but that was the fault of the incompetent idiots by whom they were edited. Certainly due regard was not shown to Christmas, otherwise his own poems in praise of the season would have been accepted and printed in large type. This very rarely happened. (Cries of "Shame!" from the back of the court.) He did not wish to particularise, but he was bound to say that no editor had shown himself more hideously blind to the merits of Christmas verse than the gentleman to whom, only the week before, he had sent a quite beautiful little lyric, beginning :

The time is nearly Christmas time,
And that's a time almost sublime.
The pleasant green tint of the holly
Bids every little bird be jolly ;
And then it has a red berry,
Which makes the heedless wayfarer merry.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell !

That was the first stanza ; there were seventeen others which he would now read ; two of them were even finer than the first. " O mincemeat,

and O mistletoe"—well, certainly he would not go on if his lordship objected. No doubt he had given the court enough to show what a great poem this was, yet it had been refused! He regarded this as an insult both to himself and to the Spirit of Christmas. He had now sent his lines to the "Hibbert Journal," and he wished to say—— (At this point in his evidence the witness was requested to stand down.)



The next witness gave his name as Samuel Pickwick, sometime President of the Pickwick Club. He was convinced that the British Public no longer honoured the Spirit of Christmas as it should—as, in fact, he and his friends had always honoured it in the good old days. Among the things essential to the rightful observance of Christmas he would name barrels of oysters, the wassail-bowl, kissing under the mistletoe, games of forfeits, ghost-stories, and quadrilles in the kitchen on Christmas Eve. He was credibly informed that there were now quite a number of kitchens in which no quadrilles were danced on this occasion, and he considered this a monstrous state of things. He believed also that the secret of making really good punch was nearly lost, which was perhaps the reason why so many people drank ginger-ale and other such abominable beverages. He thought that the British Public should be severely reprimanded for the degenerate

habits into which it had fallen, and should be bound over to better conduct in future. If people wanted to know how Christmas ought to be observed, he would refer them to an account of the manner in which he and his friends had passed the festive season at Dingley Dell. As for the necessary ghost-stories, he happened to have a little manuscript in his pocket—but, of course, he would not read it, if the court objected. He might add that he had an uncommonly poor opinion of courts of (so-called) justice. A more cruel, misguided, and outrageous verdict than that returned in a certain breach-of-promise action—— (At this point the judge interposed, expressing his regret that the case of “*Bardell v. Pickwick*” did not seem to have any bearing upon the action now before him. He must ask Mr. Pickwick merely to answer the questions of the counsel who was waiting to cross-examine him.) In cross-examination, the witness was questioned in some detail as to the liquid refreshments consumed by him on the Christmas Day to which he had referred. He said that they consisted of brandy-and-water, taken before breakfast, strong beer and cherry brandy at lunch, three bowls of punch in the evening, with glasses of wine at odd moments between whiles. Asked the apparently harmless question whether chops and tomato-sauce formed part of his Christmas fare, the witness showed unaccountable agitation, and was understood to

make some very strong references to Messrs. Dodson & Fogg, a firm of solicitors.



Other witnesses followed on the same side. Dr. Calomel asserted that Christmas was no longer observed in the right way; formerly he was called upon to treat a great number of patients suffering from acute indigestion at this time of year; now this was not the case, and his income had suffered considerably in consequence. Mr. Harefoot, a theatrical manager, deposed that Christmas pantomimes were far less successful now than in bygone periods: a fact, he considered, which was a disgrace to the British public, and showed that the rising generation was not taught to honour the Spirit of Christmas. Cross-examined, he said that there was no practical difference between the pantomimes he presented and a music-hall entertainment. He did not see why there should be. The idea that pantomimes should have an intelligible story and be healthy and amusing he described as "blooming rot." The last witness called for the plaintiff was a Mr. Patineur, who said that his business was that of a skate manufacturer. He said that in the good old days everyone bought skates at Christmas-time; now there was but little sale for them. He looked upon the buying of skates before Christmas as a pious duty, as a necessary act of homage to the Christmas Spirit. He knew nothing about changes

in the climate or mean temperatures ; he was a skate-maker, not a clerk of the weather. He did not deny that hard frosts seldom occurred in December nowadays ; that was not his point. What he did know was that people ought to buy skates at Christmas-time, that they had ceased to do so, and that therefore, in his opinion, Christmas was no longer observed as it ought to be.

The defendant, who appeared in person, then proceeded to open his case. He said that he was generally known as the British Public ; had also been described as the Man in the Street, but did not care much for that term. Looked upon this action as a “put-up job”—(sensation)—really promoted by dyspeptic grumblers and journalists in want of copy. His own relations with the Spirit of Christmas always had been, and, he was convinced, always would be, of a thoroughly amicable nature. He admitted that abundant homage was due to the Spirit of Christmas, but maintained that he had never failed to discharge the debt. No doubt he had abolished a few of the customs named by witnesses for the plaintiff, but he regarded these changes as improvements. No intelligent person attached any importance to the leaders in the “Daily Doleful.” He could not share Mr. Parnassus’ evidently high opinion of his own poems. (This remark caused Mr. Parnassus to stand up in court, with the intention of reciting further extracts from his works. After a scene

of some disorder, he was removed.) Resuming, the British Public said that Mr. Pickwick and his friends would always have a warm place in his heart. (Mr. Pickwick rose, bowed, and called loudly for two glasses of brandy-and-water.) But he ventured to think that the guzzling and boozing—(some cries of “Order!” and “Shame!”)—yes, he would repeat, the guzzling and boozing formerly associated with the festival did no real honour to the Spirit of Christmas. Modern usages, he contended, were, on the whole, quite as sincere and a thousand times more sensible. As for the evidence of the remaining witnesses, it did not call for much remark. Pantomimes that *were* pantomimes, and not vulgar rubbish, he honoured quite as much to-day as at any previous time. And, if the weather permitted, he would much rather see people skating than playing bridge. How, then, did he, the British Public, honour Christmas at the present day? He could call numerous witnesses who would testify to the thoroughness with which this important duty was performed. From remote villages he had those who would tell the court that the ancient customs were by no means extinct—that families gathered as of old before the Yuletide fire, that a thousand quarrels were ended, a thousand deeds of kindness done, when Christmas came round. Those associated with great hospitals would describe what gladness was brought even to the maimed and suffering at this season. He

had in court representatives of his Majesty's forces, who would speak as to the honour which Christmas received in the Navy and Army. It was not his business, standing in that place, to make more than a passing reference to sacred things—to the ultimate reason upon which all Christmas observance is based ; he would merely say that Christmas worship was far more real, worthy, and dignified than it was in the time vaguely referred to as "the good old days." In fact, he contended that the case against him was purely frivolous, and that the debt admittedly due from him to the Spirit of Christmas was paid to-day not less, but more fully than in the past, and he was confident, therefore, that the judgment of the court would be in his favour.



Thomas Noggs, a public-school boy, aged fourteen, was the first witness called by the defence. Had heard it said that Christmas was a bit played-out. Thought that those making such a statement were silly rotters. Christmas holidays always suited him down to the ground ; could not point to any change he would desire in them, unless they could be made a bit longer. Asked to give reasons for his love of Christmas, said that it needed someone a jolly sight cleverer than himself to explain it, but opined that it was "the general feel of things—the shop windows in the town, and the dark nights in the country, and the presents,

and the holly stuck about the old church, and the poor old buffers in the alms-houses chuckling like mad over their tips, and the little kids as keen as mustard, and the jolly old carols—and, in fact, the whole show.” He was sorry that he could not explain himself better, but he was not much of a hand at gassing. He was rather “fed up” with the ordinary pantomime, and preferred an amusing play or a circus. Did not drink “wassail”; in fact, had never heard of the brew, but managed to do himself pretty well at Christmas-time. Was quite sure that all decent people were as keen about Christmas as ever. Did not know what had been stated to the contrary in leading articles; he did not trouble to read truck of that sort.



At this stage of the proceedings the judge interposed. He said that he need not trouble the defendant to call other witnesses. In his opinion, the plaintiff had not made out a shadow of a case. It seemed to him clear that the debt to the Spirit of Christmas was still paid with admirable readiness by the British Public, as he hoped it always would be in the future. It was unnecessary to take the matter further. Judgment would be for the defendant, with costs.

His lordship's remarks drew loud applause from the crowded court, which the officials tried in vain to suppress. So ended the hearing of a memorable action.

An Unwritten Book

WHAT happened on November 2, 1610 ? . . . It is a strange portent, this new-born passion of ours for centenaries, bicentenaries, tercentenaries—even a millenary is welcomed by the far-sighted enthusiast. Can we esteem ourselves possessed of an eager and quite laudable historic sense, denied to our forefathers ? Or are we to believe—sad alternative !—that, living in an age unfruitful of great men and fine deeds, we must seek consolation for our own ineptitude by recalling a more opulent past ? Yet, denounce as you will this centenary-cult, protest (not without justice) that its results are tedious speeches, praise bereft of all sane judgment, and a multitude of bad, hastily written books, you must concede it, none the less, one real virtue. It teaches us dates ; or, to speak more exactly, re-teaches them. For the most of us learnt our dates, not without tribulation, in schooldays. Long since, however, they have merged into a mist, have become a haze of kings, queens, battles, treaties, whence but three landmarks stand forth clearly. Need I label them ? “ William the Conqueror, 1066 ; Magna Carta, 1215 ; Battle of Waterloo, 1815.” Why should

these be so patent while the rest are shrouded ? Why can twenty people state correctly the year, month, and day of Waterloo for one who can name so much as the year of Trafalgar ? Some few, by a happy gift of nature, still are "good at dates," can reel you off the kings of England with unerring volubility. Others of us have perforce to know these things, since our business is to teach the young. And the young who hear our lectures love a date better than our most glowing eloquence ; a date is a satisfying, concrete thing, easily to be set down in the note-book. But the sequence of kings would be so far less troublesome had our monarchs shown a livelier fancy in naming their offspring. Thus, for example, had we been spared that bewildering huddle of Henries, Richards, and Edwards. Why not a King Walter, a King Lionel, a King Christopher ? "His Most Excellent Majesty Christopher, by the Grace of God"—does not that sound well ? Or, if homely names be your only royal wear, might we not try to produce a reputable King John ? And never a King Thomas has worn our crown. For myself, however, I lean to melodious polysyllables, of which "Victoria" is a fortunate example. Replace it by "Jane," let us say, and how much of dignity is lost !



Meanwhile, you have not answered my question. What happened on November 2, 1610 ? You do

not know ? Is there no one in the class who can tell me ? Really, says Paidagogos, with that labouring sarcasm which he and his fellows affect, really your depths of ignorance are abysmal, simply abysmal. On November 2, 1610, died Richard Bancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury. Therefore, as even Jones minor may be able to compute (show me up another such arithmetic paper as your last, Jones, and you'll repent it—repent it, sir !), on the second day of November, 1910, we were justified in keeping Bancroft's Tercentenary. Well, tell me something about Bancroft. . . . Yes, Smith, you are correct in saying that he was Archbishop of Canterbury. It is some comfort that your massive brain yet retains a fact which I myself told you quite two minutes ago. Would it tax your kindness overmuch if I asked for further details ? . . . It would, I perceive. Brown, will you have the goodness to give us any information you possess about Archbishop Bancroft ? . . . What ? "The leader of the Non-jurors" ? Muddler ! Booby ! Dunderhead ! That was Sancroft, quite another man. The ignorance of this class is simply disgraceful, and I must consider seriously the question of giving it extra work on each half-holiday for the rest of the term. . . . We will not imitate further the fulminations of Paidagogos. Conceivably he himself, despite his pose of omniscience, only "got up" the lesson between breakfast and schooltime. And, indeed,

it is by an accident that I feel moved to celebrate Bancroft's Tercentenary, and to bore you with a little information about him. Some years ago, being engaged upon a small book of Church history, I was struck not less by the picturesqueness and interest of Bancroft's life than by the fact that as yet he has found no adequate biographer. Whitgift has had his chroniclers, beginning with Strype ; on Laud the monographs are as many as their judgments are diverse. But for Bancroft the inquirer can but turn to the "Dictionary of National Biography" article, which is accurate but concisely dull, or to the chapter in Hook's "Archbishops," which is picturesque but prodigal of inaccuracies.



Here, then, was a long-felt want ; forthwith I planned "The Life and Times of Richard Bancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury," collected a good store of material, drew up a scheme of chapters. I had, moreover, most noble promises of help from the two historians who know the period better than any other men alive ; I discovered that stacks of Bancroft's correspondence, as yet unpublished, are to be found in the British Museum. Yet the book remains unwritten, and will remain so, I fear, for years to come ; other fish are nearer to the frying-pan. And, these more imperious claims apart, sordid problems of ways and means abide ; the royalties one would receive for such a book

would not go far in satisfying the butcher, the baker, the income-tax maker. With a brighter hope of lucrative result, one might shape the material to the form of an historical romance. In all seriousness, I wonder why our novelists, having worn threadbare such themes as the Cavalier-and-Roundhead strife, the Monmouth Rebellion, and "the affair of '45," do not enter the precincts of ecclesiastical history. Father Benson, indeed, has fared therein—or, as the unkind might amend the phrase for his case—in the precincts of ecclesiastical fiction. Perhaps one should not leave unreckoned the books—a numerous tribe—framed chiefly with a view to teaching the reader Church history, wherein what there is of romance serves but to gild the pill. Excellently meant as they are, their worth as literature is scanty. Their authors are not able novelists, they are more competent to point a moral than to adorn a tale. But a writer who knew his business could fashion excellent stories from Church history without moralising, on the one hand, or doing violence to truth on the other. Mr. Weyman or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle could employ the story of Richard Bancroft to excellent purpose. Let us draft an outline for their use.



That our hero's earliest years lack incident I admit, but this is true no less of the human race

at large. Often the reader is checked severely by the first chapter or two of an autobiographical romance, because its author fails to interest us in the poor but honest parents, in the minute picture of the poor but honest parents' home, in the sketches of the people (of whom the greater part, these chapters written, vanish for good) who live in the village where stands the home which belongs to the poor but honest parents. None but the writer of "*The House that Jack Built*" could please by a tale written along such lines. Bancroft's parents were (presumably) honest and (certainly) poor. They lived at Farnworth, in Lancashire, and there Richard Bancroft was born in September, 1544. He had a benevolent great-uncle, Hugh Curwen, Bishop of Oxford, who paid for Richard's education. In 1566 he took his B.A. at Christ's College, Cambridge. Next year further supplies for his education were found by one of the odd devices of the age. He was given the prebend of Malhidert in St. Patrick's, Dublin, together with leave of absence from his stall. But Christ's was suspected of "novelism"—which does not signify a taste for romance, but a leaning towards Puritanism. Wherefore Richard was transferred to Jesus College. Indeed, there is evidence, which I may not pause to adduce here, showing that in early years Bancroft's sympathies were Puritan—a fact that explains psychologically his later deeds. No foe is so

implacable as the man ranged against beliefs he has abandoned.



Soon he becomes chaplain to Cox, Bishop of Ely, and then is given the benefice of Teversham, near Cambridge. If you favour a quiet opening scene for our novel here it might begin, with its picture of an Elizabethan country parsonage. Or you may prefer to delay the beginning for another eight years, so that you may strike a dramatic note at once. Bancroft, now one of the University's twelve preachers, has been brought from his country parish to deliver an assize sermon. He is in the church of Bury, Suffolk. Gazing at the royal arms above the altar, he espies a scrap of paper attached thereto. He takes it down, unfolds it, reads it—horror! It is a most scurrilous and treasonable libel, in which her sacred Majesty Queen Elizabeth is likened to Jezebel! "Sensation," as the newspapers say. Bancroft seems to have advertised the discovery to excellent effect; he is praised and rewarded, nor ever after does he let slip a chance of filling the same rôle. I admit that to me the performance does not seem quite above suspicion. What if the whole thing were a *coup de théâtre*—if Bancroft himself placed the paper where he found it, apt for discovery? Anyhow, after this event he seems to have specialised, so to speak, in the same line of business. He was for ever searching out and publishing Puritan

attacks on Church and Crown. The Marprelate Libels equipped him with ample opportunity ; he it was who detected their authorship ; he, it seems, who devised a counter-blast in the shape of rival pamphlets—pamphlets which, if a shade less ribald than those of Martin, were so because their authors lacked wit rather than will. To equal Martin, indeed, were no easy task. Bancroft made a close study of the Libels, and gave extracts from them in a book entitled “*Daungerous Positions and Proceedings, published and practised within this Island of Brytaine, under pretence of Reformation, and for the Presbiteriall Discipline.*” It was published in 1593, and, as Bancroft explains in his preface, only “some fewe copies” were printed. So I may account myself fortunate to possess one. It is an anthology of invective, culled from Puritan broadsheets. The Bishops are said to be described as “proud, popish, presumptuous, prophane, paltrie, pestilent, pernicious prelates and usurpers ; impudent, shameless, and waynescot-faced, like Beasts.” (“Wainscot-faced beast !” is a fine-sounding term of reproach, though I do not perceive its exact force.) The clergy are—I can quote but a few of their titles—a “crue of monstrous ungodlie wretches, an anti-christian swinish rabble, most covetous wretched and Popish Priests, the Convocation house of Divels, with Belzabub of Canterbury, the chiefe of the Divels.”



All Bancroft's life, after his first emergence to fame, abounds with rich material for our romance. He becomes chaplain to Sir Christopher Hatton, that royal favourite, and himself finds a way to please the Queen. Here, then, is the opportunity of a picturesque chapter, showing him at Elizabeth's brilliant court. Then we have the scene of his historic sermon of St. Paul's Cross. His plea for the divine origin of episcopacy was new to his age ; the sermon made a prodigious stir. Within a space of time surprisingly brief the news of it had reached Scotland, where, as you will suppose, it was not applauded. A capable writer could make much of the scene about St. Paul's, could show us the startled crowd which listened to the sermon, the fierce argument and threats which were clamoured forth at its close. Then Whitgift, himself a striking character, comes upon the stage ; Bancroft was his chaplain from 1592 and his close adviser still when, in 1597, he became Bishop of London. In that capacity his work was not ecclesiastical alone ; he had a finger in politics, and took part in a conference on matters of State with Ambassadors from Denmark. That, again, gives our novelist a fine opening. Yet more promising for him is the Hampton Court Conference ; we must remark with surprise that it has not long since figured in a romance. Bancroft, one must own, showed not to advantage on that occasion. He was grossly rude, bitterly intolerant.

When he had become Archbishop, strong controversialist as he remained, his language at least was less brutal. Of his attitude at Hampton Court I can offer you your choice between three explanations: (1) that, sitting beside Whitgift, he was simply the Archbishop's mouthpiece; (2) that he was sedulously "playing up" to his royal master—and James' behaviour was a masterpiece of unmannerly insolence; (3) that his sympathies widened somewhat with advancing years; that he was more tolerant when Archbishop than when Bishop.



So our tale will pass on to his Primacy, from November, 1604, to the same month of 1610, when he died. Much of his energies was taken up by the controversy over "Prohibitions"—the point at issue being the relations between civil and ecclesiastical discipline, and he had a doughty foe in Coke. But of this our novelist will say little; it is, in truth, a horribly difficult subject, bristling with legal technicalities. More attractive for his purpose will be Bancroft's endeavour to reform the ministry. As Primate his battle was much less against Puritans who stood aloof from the Church than with recusant clergy who accepted its offices while denying its primary doctrines. This point must be remembered when one is asked to condemn all Bancroft's action as that of a mere persecutor.

Certainly the opposite policy, as employed by his successor, Abbott, did not prove a success. . . . Well, then, this life or story of Bancroft should make a vastly entertaining book. I wish I had leisure to write it. By the time that I am able to begin, the chances are that someone else will have anticipated me. Yet I shall not begrudge him his pleasurable task—or even show my knowledge of the period by condemning him as a wainscot-faced beast.

Vicarage Books

ANYONE whose good fortune it is to be a guest in many vicarages must be struck by the variety of literary fare which such houses provide. The food for the body is less diverse; but this, of course, matters less. Long ago, in days when I wrote frivolous short stories, I meditated a sad, sad tale about a bishop. He was apparently all that a bishop should be—devout, genial, hardworking, a fine preacher, an effective organiser, beloved of all men. Yet, little as the world guessed it, his life was clouded by a Secret Sorrow, a trouble so weighty that it caused him to think of resigning his see. It was not that any intellectual difficulties beset him, that he found himself drawn (as is the way of bishops in stories) either to agnosticism or Rome. None the less, he felt that his position was desperate. Can you guess his trouble? It was this: he simply loathed roast chicken. If, mastering his repulsion, he dined off that homely fowl, he felt ill for days after. Yet as he journeyed through his rural diocese and stayed at one vicarage after another, everywhere and always roast chicken appeared on the luncheon and

dinner table. Not for worlds would he hurt the feelings of his host ; moreover, he was honestly hungry. What he did, I think, was to pack buns and bovril in his bag ; while at lunch he adopted a practice employed, as you may remember, by the schoolboys in “ Vice Versa ” : he secreted a large envelope in his pocket, and, when the attention of his host was engaged elsewhere, stealthily transferred to this receptacle large slices of roast chicken from his plate. But it happened that one of his hosts wished to erect a lich-gate to his churchyard, and the kind bishop had brought an envelope full of drawings to aid his choice. So after lunch the bishop took the vicar by the arm and handed him an envelope, remarking : “ My dear fellow, I’m sure you won’t mind my giving you a little advice. This is the sort of thing you really ought to put in your churchyard,” and the vicar opened the envelope, to find within it slices of chicken, still tepid from the lunch-table ! I forget what was to happen next, but I fancy the poor bishop had to seek some tropical diocese, where chickens and vicarages alike are unknown.



Most of us, however, being neither bishops nor averse from fowl, whether roast or boiled, fare comfortably enough in vicarages and rectories. There are still places, I believe, where one is permitted the nocturnal pipe only in the kitchen,

when the servants have gone to bed, the fire is almost out, and blackbeetles prance on the floor. But one can avoid staying in such places—anyhow, more than once. A gentle protest, too, may be whispered against the practice of spreading before the visiting preacher a large dinner at 6.30, then of taking him to a long service at 8, and of providing him with never a morsel of food afterwards. No one who has to use his voice wants to eat heavily just beforehand; whereas he does need refreshment after the strain of a sermon. But he would be a churl who complained seriously of the hospitality he received; indeed, nowhere are there kinder hosts and hostesses, nowhere is more trouble taken to make the visitor thoroughly comfortable, than in the average vicarage or rectory. I have been credibly informed of one cleric—not a bishop—who sends down in advance to any household he proposes to honour for a night a long typewritten list of his requirements—so-and-so are the dishes he likes, care must be taken to provide a hot-water bottle, and so forth. I can only say that this gentleman—no, this person—deserves to be dieted on mouldy ship's biscuit and housed in a dog-kennel. It may be that he is an invalid, and considers this singular breach of good manners necessary for the sake of his health. But let us hope—which is probably the fact—that the account of his procedure is fabulous.



I have strayed somewhat from the proposition enounced at the beginning of these remarks—to wit, that the literary fare one finds on such visits is markedly various. “But why do you require ‘literary fare’ at all?” some reader objects. “When you stay for a night in a house, surely you don’t want to read books?” That, my dear sir (or madam) depends upon circumstances. When, for example, I have the good luck to sojourn with H., he can be trusted to keep the talk going till 2 a.m. at the earliest. By that time we have solved all political problems, decided exactly what the bishops ought to do, and generally put the world to rights. J., again, is always ready, whatever the hour of the night (or morning) for just one more game of chess before turning in. But in many households I find the vice of early bedgoing terribly prevalent. One is quite willing to be sent upstairs at 10.30 sharp if that be the custom of the house, only in that case one must have something to read. There are vicarages which contain vast stores of attractive volumes. There are others—and often they are the homes of the most opulent clergy—where the only things one can find are (a) “Some Reflections on the Prophecies of Daniel,” by Thomas Stubbins, published in 1832; (b) “The Pig: a Guide to its Management in Health and Disease”; (c) a Clergy List, some years old; (d) a seedsman’s illustrated catalogue; (e) many numbers of the parish

magazine. Of such a collection the last item is decidedly the most promising.



Concerning the “insides” of these publications I will say nothing more than that, while some are better than others, the ideal does not seem as yet to have been attained. The “local matter,” as the printers term it, is far more interesting. Here you have a view in brief of parochial life. And what a deal of trouble goes to the making of these publications! Swiftly the weeks slip by, and the unhappy parson realises one morning that the next number of his parish magazine should have gone to press. He sits himself down in his study and nibbles the end of his penholder. What is there to write about this month? Well, in a town the topics are fairly plentiful. Some of the urban magazines, indeed, are most elaborate, containing long reports of meetings, and articles on social questions, and original verse. But in the country the editor is also the only reporter and the only contributor, while “events” are lamentably scarce. It is always possible to put in a grumble at the size of the congregation on Sunday mornings, or the small total of the collections; but such remonstrances are apt to have a querulous ring, and no improvement is likely to be brought about by grumbles in print. So the editor falls back upon the usual topics—the Confirmation, the Sunday-

school treat, the special Lent services. And presently, with a sigh of relief, the thing is put into the postbag and the writer is relieved to know that not for four weeks will the task have to be done once more. But it is uncommonly hard upon the vicar if, as so often happens, the parish magazine does not pay its way, and he has to make up the deficit from his meagre income. At times he wonders if he would be justified in bringing the publication to an end. Yet he hesitates to do this, partly because it would seem like a confession of failure. Every "live" parish is expected to have its magazine nowadays. And he may fairly believe, I think, that, at least indirectly, the magazine is useful. Whatever its contents, it is taken round the village by himself, or his wife, or perhaps by cheerful young ladies, rosy-cheeked and sensibly shod for muddy lanes, from the Hall. And it gives just that excuse for a call which is needed. Many a district visitor is nervous, especially when new to the work, over calling at a cottage without invitation. With the reason of a magazine to leave the task is less formidable, the conversational ice is broken more readily, and the way prepared for future visits.



Personally, I always read the parish magazine at a vicarage, if one comes my way. A study of it suggests certain criticisms, which I will offer in all humility, knowing that the work of writing such

pages each month is less easy than the public imagines. But the first point that strikes one in glancing at the average rural parish magazine—I refer to its “local matter” only—is its abominable style. One would not suggest or wish that these paragraphs should be phrased with subtle regard to cadence and diction. What is needed is straightforward simplicity. What is provided is a clumsy imitation of shoddy journalese. Because he is an editor, the parson thinks that he must employ the first person plural. Let me cite an actual example. What he wishes to say is: “I wish to see all the boys who are to be confirmed. They must come to the vicarage on Tuesday night, at 6 p.m. sharp.” What he *does* say is: “We desire to have a further interview with all the male candidates for Confirmation ere they are actually presented for that holy rite. May we therefore request them to be in attendance at the vicarage next Tuesday evening, at six o’clock? And we would add a word on the merit of punctuality on such occasions. The lack of it argues a lack of earnestness on the part of candidates, while it causes much needless inconvenience to him who has the serious responsibility of conducting their preparation.” I have no doubt that the author of this paragraph is a quite simple and sensible man in real life. Why, then, should he write as if he were a pompous donkey?



Here, again (in another magazine), is the account of a choir-trip. It is meant to be humorous, and the author is one of those who think that humour can be attained by the simple plan of using long words in place of short ones. Some of his choir-boys went for a sail, and most of them were seasick. His mode of relating the fact is to say that "the majority of our gallant young mariners were, alas! much discomfited by the turbulence of Father Neptune." Judged by any standard, this type of writing is not very admirable, but what are we to say of it when it appears in a magazine intended for agricultural labourers and their wives? Can we wonder if the circulation is small? The best way of reporting a choir-trip is to make some of the boys write descriptions of the outing, to reward the best account with a shilling, and to print it, exactly as written, in the parish magazine. Anyhow, if the thing is to be read by the villagers (and the usefulness of a magazine which remains unread is small), the editor must be careful to use the simplest and plainest English. He must not talk about the "turbulence of Father Neptune." Yet, for some mysterious reason, country clergy, who are quite direct and unaffected in speech, relapse straightway into official pomposity or elephantine waggery when they sit down to write their parish magazine. This is bad even in a town parish, but it is quite fatal in the country. Is it not possible that these publications might

be made far more useful in the villages if only they were written in a style that the parishioners could understand ? As for the dearth of material, some incumbents have broken away from the ordinary round of subjects, and with much success. Occasionally I have met a short history of the parish, continued from month to month, which seems excellent. If the church be an old one, a history of it is welcomed by the parishioners. Of course it must be done quite simply. It is no manner of use to inform your rustic reader that the choir arcading is Perpendicular in character. Even if you say that it dates from the fifteenth century you leave but a hazy impression on his mind. But put the fact in a simple and concrete way, say "the arch by the organ was made four hundred and fifty years ago," and he will remember it. Again, many parishes have a mine of interesting information in their registers, churchwardens' accounts, etc. Extracts from them would make the magazine quite attractive, but one does not often find them. For myself, I believe greatly in the parish magazine, and I doubt if the extent of its usefulness, especially in our country parishes, has yet been recognised. Punctuality in publication is another point of importance. I should like to enlarge upon it . . . but as my own parish magazine happens to be several days overdue at the moment, it strikes me that I had better set to work upon it, and bring this paper to an end.

Visions of the Night

HAVE you dreamed lately of green mice ? This, let me hasten to explain, is not an aspersion of my reader's sobriety. No green mice have figured in my own visions, but I rather wish they had. For I have been reading "The Dreamer's Guide : A Compendium of Dreams and Visions faithfully expounded : With a Key to Omens, Prognostics, and the like. To which are added Examples from the Wisdom of the Ancients, now first Collected." The author of this volume modestly conceals his name, but his treatise was published in 1784. And he declares that to dream of green mice, so far from indicating incipient *delirium tremens*, is an augury of "a swift increase of wealth." Such a dream would be distinctly cheering, therefore, in days like ours, when we might be expected rather to behold in our sleep "a hare sitting solitary upon a hill," since this "signifieth discontent and uprisings, with disturbance of commerce." Animals seem to have figured rather largely in the dreams of the eighteenth century. To dream of goats is a sign of an approaching journey, while a "fire-breathing dragon" shows

that you need "wise counsel"—which, one conjectures, might include some suggestions with regard to diet and a liver-pill. So far as can be learnt from a rather hurried survey of these pages, the most desirable of all dreams is that in which you find yourself "at sea, with a fair wind"; then you can count upon "an easy life, with a fortunate marriage and prosperity in commerce." Therefore to be "all at sea," if hardly desirable in the day-time, is the happiest lot I can wish my readers for the night. And, if possible, let a green mouse scurry across the deck. Yet if you have a dream which "*The Dreamer's Guide*" classes as ill-omened, the consolation is possible that some rival authority may interpret it quite differently. Probably there is another work in which even "a hare sitting solitary upon a hill" is described as a vision to be coveted. For "*The Dreamer's Guide*" attacks various (unnamed) rival publications in great style. With interest I notice that it assails the doctrine, still upheld in some quarters, that "dreams go by opposites." To this theory I could never subscribe, for several reasons. In the first place, most dreams have no "opposites." Even when one is told that a dream of a funeral forecasts a wedding the antithesis seems imperfect. But what is the opposite of a green mouse, and how do you dream it? ❖

Secondly, if in order to secure good luck you have merely to experience unpleasant dreams,

the process would become absurdly simple. Nightmares can be had to order, so to speak. Anyone could ensure good fortune on Tuesday by supping late on Monday night off tough pork chops, suet pudding, lobster, and pickled onions. Thus you would be tolerably certain of tragic dreams, and correspondingly sure of real prosperity, if "dreams go by opposites." How to make sure of pleasant dreams is a much more difficult problem. In obedience to the "Guide," you wish, while asleep, to imagine yourself "at sea, with a fair wind," in order to gain "prosperity in commerce," and other desirable things. Accordingly, before retiring to bed you gaze at a marine picture and read Marryat and Dibdin for an hour or two. What will be the result? Probably that you will dream of turnips or the Insurance Act. Our subliminal self, or subconscious mind, or whatever you like to term it, refuses to obey orders of this sort. A favourite poet of mine wrote of this truth in a sorrowful confession, from which I quote a few stanzas:

Amanda, your penitent lover
Who strives to prove worthy his bliss,
Is pained beyond words to discover
A point where he's sadly remiss ;
But since in a resolute fashion
He tries, if he cannot succeed,
May he hope you will take, in compassion,
The will for the deed ?

In the day, I accomplish my duty—
Whatever its varying lot,
The thought of your sweetness and beauty,
Believe me, is never forgot ;

That at night, without any omission,
I dream, dear Amanda, of you,
I would add—were not such an addition
Completely untrue !

.

Last evening, before I would go to
My virtuous slumbers again,
I earnestly gazed at your photo.—
Like others, that effort was vain !
I dreamed that on something between a
Giraffe and a thorough-bred bear
I hunted a laughing hyena
Round Regency Square !

I can dream of a passage of Plato's,
I can dream of my grandmother's cat,
I can dream I am planting potatoes
In a charming South Kensington flat ;
I can dream of my cook and my hatter,
Or of friends—quite a numerous crew—
But—this is the root of the matter—
Not once about *you* !

There are people who try to keep a dream-diary, which must be an extraordinarily difficult task. Most of us, when we wake, have but a hazy remembrance of our dreams, which becomes fainter each moment. Did one try to reduce it to writing, one would be puzzled to say how much of it actually had been part of the dream, and how much was unconsciously supplied by fancy as we endeavoured to bring the details before us with precision. There are a few, I believe, whose dreamland is more or less of a fixed territory, who revisit in sleep the same scene over and over again, so that at last they become familiar with every feature of it. Everyone will remember the

use which Mr. Kipling has made of this idea in his splendid story, "The Brushwood Boy." Generally speaking, it seems to be places rather than people that recur; imaginary characters do not reappear upon the stage of sleep-land night after night. Personally, for some reason which seems incapable of explanation, I dream, perhaps, once a month or so, on an average, about some member of the Royal Family. I am, I hope, an ordinarily loyal citizen. But certainly I am no student of the "Court Circular," nor can I claim that intimate knowledge of royal pedigrees which some persons, especially maiden ladies, exhibit. They are quite shocked when one seems indifferent to the birth or marriage of some German princeling, since by a remote link of consanguinity he is an extremely distant cousin of a junior member of our Royal House. And they know all about the ages, tastes, and habits of the Crowned Heads of Europe. If such experts had dealings with the Royal Family in their visions there would be no ground for surprise. But what strange freak of the sub-conscious mind makes my dreams take this turn, so that quite often I meet the King—usually we are lunching together in some sort of restaurant—and offer him advice on things in general, which he receives with gracious humility? If dreams "go by opposites" the inference must be that I am a red republican in my waking hours.



Do you suppose that the dreams of great men differ from those of us ordinary mortals? Did Shakespeare, for instance, in his sleep find himself a spectator of tragedies more moving than "Macbeth," comedies more diverting than "Twelfth Night"? "The Tempest" is nearer to a dream-story than either of these, and "The Comedy of Errors" has in it that touch of fantastic impossibility which is common in visions; its main idea well might have been conceived in a dream. But in that case it was by some dreamer long before Shakespeare, the *motif* being already a venerable one when he handled it anew. On the whole, however, it is probable that Shakespeare dreamed much as you and I do. Sometimes, perhaps, he imagined himself to be poaching in Sir Thomas Lucy's preserves, a gamekeeper in pursuit. "He was much given," in the charming words of an old chronicle, "to all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits." Scenes of this kind, and confused pictures of the Mermaid Tavern, probably filled a larger part of his slumbers than shadowy dramas and gigantic poetical conceptions. Tennyson has put down four lines which, he said, were composed in his sleep, and Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" has a circumstantial preface describing how the poet made "from two to three hundred lines" while slumbering profoundly, of which he was able afterwards to recall without effort the fifty-four printed as "Kubla Khan." But this fragment,

like the "Ancient Mariner," was produced not by a natural dream, but by one under the influence of laudanum. Readers of De Quincey will not need to be told of the vividness which the use of this drug lends to dreams. Much as some of us might wish to compose fine poems or stories in our sleep, to become victims of the drug-habit would be too heavy a price to pay for the power.



Indeed, if anyone has elaborate dreams night after night which he remembers easily, the chances are that he needs the help of a doctor. R. L. Stevenson's "Chapter on Dreams" is a fascinating essay, but it is also a pathological study. It was a dream which gave him the main part of "Jekyll and Hyde," and his "brownies," as he called them, "labour all night long, and all night long set before him truncheons of tales upon their lighted theatre." But this was after he had spent the day in "belabouring his brains for a story," and these brownies were, in truth, monitory imps, whose warning was of an eager brain too active for a frail physique. Struggling authors who read his paper with envy, wishing that their own dreams were equally serviceable, may be profoundly thankful if they sleep for the most part (so far as they know) dreamlessly, or if all that they can recollect of their occasional visions is a tissue of inconsequent rubbish. If your brain

will not wholly rest by night, be content if it merely plays the fool. If it works clearly and consecutively, have a care to your health; the symptom is ominous. Probably most of us who have been engaged in literary work have been less thankful than we ought for our brownies' frolicsome idiocy, not recognising in it a sign of bodily well-being. Certainly it is annoying to wake up, as I have done scores of times, with a triumphant chuckle, saying, "What a splendid idea for a story! Certainly I shall use that to-morrow," and then to find, when one is fully awake, either that the thing has vanished utterly, or that it is puerile beyond words. One has read, again, of poets and musicians who have kept pencil and paper at their bedside in order that the dream-inspirations should be prevented from escaping. Once only did I attempt this—a considerable number of years ago. I dreamed that I had written a poem of supreme merit. While still half awake I managed to recall the refrain, which even then seemed magnificent. Drowsily I lighted a candle, scribbled down the line, and went happily to sleep, feeling sure that this time the trick was done, this time I had gained the nucleus round which a really splendid lyric should be written. In the twilight of the next morning I awoke and eagerly took out the paper from beneath my pillow. It bore these words only :—

Ponting knights go to market.

That was all. I cannot tell you what a ponting knight is. The great poem remains unwritten.



In novels (but not elsewhere, I think) people have dreams—or had once, for the fashion is rather past—which were serviceable in other and more direct ways. In a dream William imagined himself digging at the foot of a gnarled elm on the lonely heath. Next morning, of course, he set forth with a spade, and, equally of course, from the spot indicated in the dream, he dug up a vast store of gold, enabling him to marry the heroine in the last chapter, and to live happily ever after. The dream, too, was more efficient than even Sherlock Holmes in tracing the perpetrator of crime. In another variation, Jasper is told in a dream to purchase his late grandfather's old arm-chair. He attends the auction next day. Somehow the villain has got hold of the secret, and bids desperately against the hero. The room is hushed with excitement. Each bid is acclaimed with cheers. It seems that the villain wins. Jasper cannot match his last bid. With a cynical smile the villain urges the auctioneer to knock down the lot. But the heroine rushes forward. Unknown to the hero, she has been saving money for years. All her little hoard is at the hero's disposal. He bids again, and the villain turns deathly pale, and mutters, "Foiled, foiled!" You know the rest.

The arm-chair is cut open, and hidden in the seat is the Missing Will. In real life, alas ! our dreams are less useful, being mainly nonsense or nightmares. Clerical nightmares are a distinct breed. Often they are connected with sermons ; one is in the pulpit hunting desperately for a text which has disappeared, or realising suddenly that every word of the sermon has escaped one's memory, while the German Emperor, in a pew next to the pulpit, is shouting loudly to the choir that he will set off to the North Pole if we don't begin soon. Personally, I rather enjoy my nightmares, especially the latter part of them. For at a certain point I always wake up sufficiently to reflect that all this seems very horrible and absurd, but it is only a dream, so it doesn't much matter. Thereafter the tragedy moves forward, but throughout the under-knowledge that it *is* a dream persists, and robs it of all terror.

The Pilgrim

ON May 11, 18—, in an obscure Northamptonshire village, was born John Ebenezer Scroggins, widely known among his contemporaries as “Deaf-adder Scroggins” owing to his bitter hatred of music. This trait manifested itself at a very early age. It is recorded that Scroggins, when but four years old, attacked, and nearly succeeded in killing, another child of about the same age who was amusing himself with a tin trumpet. Before he was eighteen John Ebenezer had completed the first volume of his famous treatise on “Music the Mocker of Manners and Morality, with Some Remarks on the Performance of So-called Operas.” Little is known of his later years, but once at least he seems narrowly to have escaped conviction on a charge of murder. An itinerant fiddler was found dead close to Scroggins’ residence, and the circumstances were deemed highly suspicious. Probably “Music the Mocker” is not widely known in our days, yet its admirers have thought that the centenary of Scroggins should not be allowed to pass without notice. Accordingly the date is to be celebrated by a monster concert in

the Albert Hall. Among those who will figure on the programme are Herr Rosingut, the famous violinist, Madame Pentazinni, fresh from her recent operatic triumphs . . . yes, my dear reader, the doubts beginning at this point to assail your mind are only too well founded. I have been fooling you ; Scroggins is a figment of the imagination. But if he had existed, if his days had been given to the extirpation of music, then I believe, in sober earnest, that we should have chosen a concert as the best means of honouring his centenary. For such, you see, is our national logic ; such our sense of humour. Quite lately we commemorated Milton, the austere Puritan, by an aldermanic banquet at the Mansion House. Now it is proposed to show honour to the memory of John Bunyan by erecting a stained-glass window in Westminster Abbey ! You have only to recall the feelings of Bunyan and his friends towards churches in general, and their treatment of stained-glass windows in particular, to appreciate the luminous wisdom—or should one say the mordant satire ?—of such a memorial to such a man.



His was a strange destiny. He was the author of some sixty works, of which fifty-six are utterly forgotten ; three (" Mr. Badman," " The Holy War," and " Grace Abounding ") are read by a few students, and one is known the whole world

over. "The Pilgrim's Progress" has been translated, it is said, into no fewer than eighty-four languages and dialects; the Japanese and Chinese have versions of their own; even the Roman Catholics, by a rather stupendous feat of editing, have recast it to square with their beliefs. The author's comments on this transformation of his work would have been worth hearing; in the original, as you may remember, the portrait of "Giant Pope" is not exactly flattering. Probably, however, few modern readers of "The Pilgrim's Progress" care twopence about its theology or its value as an allegory. If we read it when we are grown up (not many do, I fancy), that which compels our homage is the force and truth with which its characters are drawn. But most of us made its acquaintance when we were small children, when it appealed to us as a thrilling fairyland, with plenty of spirited fighting. As for the moralising and the copious scriptural quotations, we left them out, with that happy facility for skipping which distinguishes ingenuous youth. . . . Isn't it odd how closely certain books are associated with particular periods of our lives, how vividly those times reappear whenever we open again the familiar pages? I shall be surprised if you do not link almost every illness of your childhood with the discovery of some delightful volume. There was chicken-pox, for example; an absurd ailment, which did not make one feel ill in the least degree;

my chicken-pox brought with it "Frank Fairleigh," a work probably forgotten now, but the humorous passages of which caused shouts of delight—and didn't one admire the hero, who in moments of emotion paced his room with a heaving breast, set brow, and flashing eye! Your modern hero has quite lost that art. Then it was another illness, I think, which introduced the "Ingoldsby Legends." . . .



As for "The Pilgrim's Progress," when I open it I see again the playroom at a certain preparatory school for small boys. It is a wet half-holiday, soon after the Christmas holidays. Fond memories of the Drury Lane pantomime linger still, and the boys are diverting themselves with a dramatic performance of their own. Not content with the fairy-tales which form the usual bases of pantomimes, last night they charged one of their number to supply something fresh. Jam tarts, Turkish delight, and literary glory were to be his if he succeeded; kicks and other unpleasant things the penalty of disobedience. So he borrowed Bunyan's masterpiece from the school library, and—without, I assure you, any sense of irreverence—proceeded to turn it into a pantomime. This was enacted with considerable applause. I forget the details of the earlier scenes, but the Slough of Despond became a gymnasium mattress over which Pilgrim stumbled direly. More to the

popular taste was a later scene where Pilgrim did battle with Apollyon. Both of them were armed with singlesticks. Apollyon had blackened his face to make his appearance more horrific, and, with the aid of some preparation of tow (supplied in "The Boys' Own Box of Parlour Magic, 1s.") attempted to breathe out sparks and smoke, not without extreme discomfort. Pilgrim was attired—I know not why—in a football jersey, of black and yellow stripes. He met Apollyon "straddling right across the way" (in accordance with the stage direction), and the dire battle began. Apollyon, still faithful to his part, exclaimed: "I swear by my Infernal Den that thou shalt go no further; here will I spill thy soul!" To whom Pilgrim, sorely beaten about his ribs, made answer (not at all out of the book this time, and much to the prompter's dismay) "Steady on, you silly owl! What'you lamming me like that for?" and the contest became decidedly realistic, till at length a master entered the room, demanding an explanation of this noise. "The Devil, sir!" cried an enthralled spectator; "please, sir, it's Jones *minor* fighting the Devil!" Then and there, to the dramatist's sorrow (and I suppose I may as well confess that *I* was the dramatist who had "adapted" Mr. Bunyan), the performance was brought to a premature end, and we were called upon to endure a well-meant but quite unnecessary lecture against

“profanity.” . . . I wonder if Pilgrim and Apol-
lyon are alive to-day, and if that performance
remains in their memories !



For other, and younger, children “The Pilgrim’s Progress” was made to serve a less pleasant purpose ; they were regaled with an illustrated edition when they were naughty, and nurses or governesses would insist, with grim emphasis, that Master Harry or Miss Mary was disobedient, that disobedience was a sin, and that the ultimate fate of sinners was faithfully portrayed in these abominably lurid pictures of the City of Destruction. Picture-Bibles, by the way, were almost as bad. No doubt the modern child has drawings by Tissot, but the picture-Bibles of an earlier generation were distinctly crude. Some of the illustrations seemed rather attractive, such as that of the gigantic bunches of grapes (each grape as large as your head) attached to a pole which two staggering spies brought back from the Promised Land. Others, however, were simply terrifying ; there was one, coloured a dismal brown, of Korah and his companions disappearing into the earth, and another depicting the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah : they haunted you by day, they gave you dreadful nightmares after you had gone to bed. And many children had equally disagreeable dreams based upon an illustrated “Pilgrim’s

Progress." It seems doubtful whether at any time its "religious interest," as modern publishers would say, made up its chief attraction. One may suspect that many of its first readers were men who, like the author, had been punished because (to quote the indictment laid against Bunyan) they "devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to church to hear divine service." Naturally, they enjoyed the polemic against the ruling powers and the powerful satire of the "Vanity Fair" episode concerning ecclesiastical courts *temp.* Charles II.



But the real merit of this unique book lies, as has been said above, in its extraordinary wealth of characters and in the rare discernment with which these are drawn. The political and religious controversies of the seventeenth century have passed away, yet human nature is much the same as it was then. And Bunyan, though but an illiterate tinker, possessed the artistic temperament, with a sensitive and swift perception of the essential points in a character. Hopeful, and By-ends, and Money-love, and all the rest of his people are with us still, while most of us have passed by Doubting Castle and climbed the Hill Difficulty. Here and there, too, in the narrative we meet with a phrase of exquisite tenderness, such as that description of the night spent in the "House

Beautiful": "Thus they discoursed together till late at night, and, after they had committed themselves to their Lord for protection, they betook themselves to rest. The Pilgrim they laid in a large upper chamber, whose window opened towards the sunrising: the name of the chamber was *Peace*, where he slept till break of day." How kindly, too, is the treatment (in the Second Part, so unjustly decried by Froude and other critics) of Mr. Fearing, who comes with such dire misgiving to the River of Death: "And here also I took notice of what was very remarkable; the water of that River was lower at this time than ever I saw it in all my life; so he went over at last, not much above wet-shod." No wonder that Bunyan sympathised with Mr. Fearing, for in his younger days his own religious fears had driven him almost to madness. They are vividly described in "Grace Abounding," in which nothing, perhaps, is at once more humorous and more pathetic than the story of Bunyan's seeking comfort from "an ancient Christian." "About this time," he writes, "I took opportunity to break my mind to an ancient Christian, and told him all my case. I told him also that I was afraid that I had sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, and he told me *he thought so too*." . . . Can't you imagine that "ancient Christian" and the horrible self-righteousness with which he pronounced this judgment? "Here, therefore," adds

Bunyan, "I had but cold comfort." Yes, it is such "ancient Christians"—some of whom, by the way, are quite modern—that drive timorous souls to despair.



As a matter of fact, Bunyan's most heinous sins, for the commission of which he deemed himself beyond hope of salvation, were playing tip-cat, dancing, and helping to ring the church bells. He belonged to that type of persons whose temptation is to think, not too well, but too badly, of themselves. Indeed, the type is more common than most people imagine. One is afraid to think how much mischief is done by those well-intentioned sermons and books of devotion which foster such a weakness, which bid folk brood deeply over past offences. "Forgetting the things that are behind"—how much wiser was the Apostle's example! "Encourage people to believe in themselves, because God believes in them"—verily, I believe that to be the golden rule for those of us who have to preach—nay, for all who wish to help their fellow-men in the things that matter most. Bunyan himself gave us a portrait of one who did such work, and probably of all his characters we love Mr. Greatheart the best. Think, my reader, of those who have had an influence upon your life. One of them pointed out various dangers that might (or might not) beset you if

you followed a certain path. Others caused you to see how frequent and how complete had been your failures. I don't mean to say that such counsellors may not have had their uses, or that you should be otherwise than thankful to them. But supposing you had the luck to meet a Mr. Greatheart on your pilgrimage, didn't he render you the best service of all ? He showed you that things were not so bad as you had fancied, that the evils you anticipated might not happen after all, while your power of overcoming them depended upon your going forward with a high courage ; he enabled you to have a better opinion of yourself and your possibilities—that was the man you loved ! And why ? Because—in all reverence be it said—his was the method which most resembled that of Christ. And if you and I can set ourselves in our turn to do the work of Greatheart for our fellows, we shall better our own lives and those of others—while, incidentally, we shall be honouring the memory of Greatheart's portrayer much more worthily than by giving him a stained-glass window in Westminster Abbey.

“From Harmony to Harmony”

A STRANGER might have been rather puzzled, I think, by the appearance our town presented on three consecutive days of last month. First, he would have gathered from the flags decorating the public buildings that some sort of festivity was in progress. Then he would have noticed that the streets were full of visitors, who streamed from the station or descended from a variety of conveyances—lordly motors, brakes, and farm-carts. Many of the arrivals were, obviously, rustic children, ruddy-cheeked, and attired in nice white dresses ornamented with nosegays. Could this be, you might wonder, some vast and rather early Sunday-school treat? But soon you would have seen that very many of the arrivals were adults: some of them factory-hands, others country farmers and labourers, with a very large sprinkling of the “gentry” among them. Most of the bands bore some distinguishing mark; thus, from one wagonette would alight a party all of whom wore a pink flower, from another a troop with blue rosettes, and so forth. Unlike the normal trippers who come here, they did not hasten incontinently to scramble up the hills—an occupation, indeed, for which

these nice white dresses and Sunday suits were inappropriate. Presently you would get a clue from the fact that most of them carried rolls of music, while others handled violin-cases anxiously through the crowd, or staggered under the burden of 'cellos. Each group, too, had its leader—the rustic parson, or the rustic parson's wife, or the organist, or the schoolmistress—who fussed round the rest like an anxious hen among her chickens. As you drew close you might overhear mystic words of exhortation: "Now, Billy, remember you're not to eat more than one bun before we sing." . . . "Altos, do look out for that A flat in the third line." . . . "Please don't forget that bass lead on the last page—you come in *after* the second beat" (here the speaker begins to hum a tune and to beat time with his hands), "one, two, *and* three—got it?" You catch, too, other fragments of conversation and complaint as the contingents merge into one stream which is flowing towards the Assembly Rooms: "Oh, *we* shan't do anything. Our only decent tenor hasn't come because he's got a cow sick!" "Well, our best boy tumbled off a ladder yesterday, the little wretch!" "Ethel, have you got a spare E string? Mine always breaks at the critical moment." "Yes, but what one always feels about Debussy and these moderns is" . . . "Foresters' supper it wor last night, and I du be tur'ble harse this marning!"



In fact (as you may have guessed by this time) the event bringing these hundreds of people together is one of those musical competitions which, we may be glad to know, are becoming increasingly numerous in this country. I suppose that we borrowed the idea of them from Wales. Then—chiefly in the rather terrific form of brass-band contests—they became popular in the North. (I have heard a performance by one of the most famous of these bands; its tone was big and brassy beyond description. Not Sousa's instrumentalists, at their loudest, made so stupefying a noise.) In the North, too, and most of all in Yorkshire, the people have a genius for choral singing; a Leeds chorus is much more pleasant to hear than any of those brazen bands. Now the vogue of musical competitions is spreading to other parts of England; they are becoming, it is scarcely too much to say, a factor in the social life of the people. It would not be easy to praise them more highly than they deserve. A good deal has been written as to whether or no they tend to raise the general level of musical taste. Probably they do, provided that the committees show wisdom in choosing the "test-pieces." And—which, after all, matters far more—they are extraordinarily good for the competitors. They bring a new interest into the lives both of village folk and factory hands—into lives, that is, which are apt to be far too limited in their interests. They

are educative morally and mentally, as well as musically. One might suppose that they have certain dangers also—the dangers of jealousy and ill-feeling that public rivalry sometimes is apt to provoke. For example, if it has ever been your lot to organise a village flower-show, you were more than ordinarily fortunate if you carried the thing through without causing a good deal of soreness. Probably the good far outweighed the bad ; the effort was quite worth while. But when Mr. Smith’s potatoes were awarded the first prize, it is quite possible that Mr. Brown, who had expected to win it, was by no means reticent as to his opinion of the judge, and Smith, and Smith’s exhibit, and you, and the flower-show in general.



Something of the same kind might have been expected as an inevitable drawback of a musical competition. It may be sometimes there are disagreeable symptoms of this kind, and that the judge’s decisions and criticisms are not well received. But on the occasion of which I am writing there was hardly a trace of this evil—and, to be frank, I was rather on the alert to notice it, wondering how far it was inevitable, and to what extent it must be written down as a weak point of the system. But, in casual talk with scores of competitors, I found the heartiest readiness to praise the judge’s decisions, whether or no the speaker’s choir or quartet had been placed

below its rivals. Now let me invite you to make your way into the hall where the competition is taking place. At one end is the platform, with a piano upon it, and rows of benches in the background. When "Class Y," for example, of the programme is reached, all the choirs competing in that class range themselves upon these benches ; one by one they come to the front of the platform and sing ; the others listen critically, but applaud each other with right good will. In the centre of the hall, facing the platform, is a table ; on the table is a chair ; on the chair is the eminent musician who is acting as judge. Through twelve hours daily, with but the shortest intervals for refreshment, that patient man sits and listens and takes notes and pronounces judgment. From the programme you learn that there are a vast number of competitions—for boys' solos and sight-singing, for town and country church choirs, for instrumental quartets and trios, for elementary schools, for men's vocal quartets, for village choral societies, and so on. The test-pieces are chosen beforehand by the committee. Thus, if there are, let us say, fourteen competitors in one class, the judge has the pleasure of listening to the same song fourteen times in succession.

In the body of the hall is a very large audience, composed partly of the performers' friends and backers, partly of those who will figure in other classes of the competition, and a good many

of the general public. As we take our places the “Village Choral Societies” class is just beginning. An official announces: “Class Y, number one”; a band of singers takes up its position at the front of the platform; the judge strikes a bell; an energetic conductor waves his baton; and choral society No. 1 makes its way bravely through two part-songs. Loud applause from its rivals at the back of the platform; also from its supporters in the hall. The judge scribbles notes impassively, while choral society No. 2 deploys into position. A ring on the bell, a wave of the hand from No. 2’s conductor, and we hear those part-songs for the second time. One might think that, at least to the casual listener, the performance would grow extremely wearisome long before choral society No. 8 (and last) had done its turn. In point of fact, it is not wearisome at all. As a general rule, the actual standard reached by these villagers is surprisingly high. Each choir, too, has quite its own method of interpretation, and each—a source of unfailing joy—its own conductor. To watch them is a sheer delight. Some of them are clergy, some are village organists, some are ladies. Some wield a baton like to a barge-pole in size; some conduct with their hands only; one at least indicates the *tempo* by a succession of vigorous kicks. My friend X, that admirable country parson, swishes a large stick laterally through the air, for all the world as if he were inflicting severe

corporal punishment. One lady contrives to get in six rapid quaver-beats in the bar throughout a song—a feat which makes the spectator giddy. Others (like Merlin) trust to “a charm of waving hands,” and quaintly enough they wave them. But, whether owing to, or in spite of, the conductors, the performances reach a most creditable level.



After all have finished the judge mounts the platform, masses all the choirs—so that he has a body of some 300 performers before him—and makes them join together in singing through the pieces once more, under his conductorship. The result is wonderful, and the way in which, at a first attempt, and with a large, heterogeneous body of village singers, he gets the effects he wants is an object-lesson worth more than many lectures on conducting. Excellent also is the moral result : those who were rivals a few minutes since are now allies, standing shoulder to shoulder and singing together ; any little asperities that competition may have caused are smoothed away by this comradeship. Then the judge reads aloud his notes, criticising each of the individual renderings he has heard, and stating the marks which each society has gained. Once more the winners are most warmly applauded by the losers, and we pass on to the next event on the programme. So the affair is carried on through three days, culminating on the evening of the final day in a concert, when

all the performers take part, and the various winners march up proudly to receive their certificates. Apart from the actual performances, there is, especially for the villagers, the pleasure of an "outing," the fraternising with people from other places, and the general atmosphere of harmony, in more than the musical sense, which these musical competitions promote. Again, the casual listener must not judge their value solely by the ultimate result; it is not only the competition, but the months of preparation which are to be taken into account. Again and again those factory hands have met in the winter evenings for their practices. But for them, perhaps many of the hours would have been spent far less profitably. It is a great boon that the men should not be driven to the public-house for their "sing-songs." Nor does it need much imagination to picture the practices in the village. Here one of the real problems, as every rural parson knows, is the lack of social life and amusement, especially "when blood is nipt and ways be foul," in the long winter nights. It is this lack of amusement which is drawing away the young men and girls to the cities.



So, behind the performance in the town, the final goal and crown, we can look back to what has gone before it. You see the early night falling on copse and hedgerow; the infrequent lights glimmering here and there from cottage and farm. Presently lanterns glimmer in the lane, and doors

open in the straggling village street, where the haunting fragrance of wood-smoke lingers in the chill air. Here is the doctor, but lately in from his long round, and the curate ; the schoolmaster and his wife ; two or three labourers ; some of the farmer's cheerful daughters (and the amount of work those young women get through in the course of a day is amazing) ; perhaps the local "harmonious blacksmith"—a score or so in all, they pick their way through the darkness and the mud to the vicarage or the schoolroom, each with a bundle of part-songs. And then, in an atmosphere of friendliness and oil-lamps, they set to work, practising diligently for an hour or more. . . . Very likely the musical skill may not be great—though, when you come to hear the finished product on the day of competition, it is often amazingly good. Very likely there is a good deal of unintended humour about the practice which would provide "Punch" artists with frequent opportunities. These things don't matter. What does matter is the sociability of it all, the little jests and the comradeship, Mrs. Vicar sharing a copy of the madrigal with the village postmistress ; the rubbing-off of angles, the laughter and work together. At the end they agree that the songs went much better than last time, and next week they will meet again. So the cheery "good nights" are said, and lanterns rekindled, and the little company go their ways. But I think that the good-looking young farmer insists upon seeing home that

soprano, the daughter of another farmer, and that presently the parishioners will be invited to say if they know any cause or just impediment why—why, in fact, the idyll should not lead to its proper and satisfactory termination. So it is the practices, and the social influence they have in village life, which are the real glory of these musical competitions. But the solemn committee which met in the county town and framed the syllabus had no idea that it was acting as a kind of matrimonial agency !



I have no space to deal at length with other benefits of the system—as, for example, its usefulness in raising the standard of village church music. Yet, obviously, it is considerable. For once in a way, if the committee has chosen the test-pieces wisely, the choir learns real music instead of rubbish. Both organist and choristers, too, can profit by the judge's kindly criticism, as well as by hearing good town choirs. But church music is too vast a subject to tackle here. "I shall not have written in vain," as authors used to say at the end of their prefaces, if I have interested anyone in the idea of musical competitions, the increasing vogue of which, provided they be managed on the right lines, is a fact very heartily to be welcomed.

“The Matchless Orinda”

IN a previous page something was written concerning valentines and the verses in which, as February 14 came round, each punctual lover protested his devotion. His missive was received, no doubt, by any properly behaved young lady with profuse blushes and feelings too deep for words. But it is odd that scarcely one maiden who might wish to twang the lyre in return was able to do so. Until quite recent times verse-writing was most rare as a feminine accomplishment. If you take the whole body of English poetry from its beginning to the middle of the nineteenth century, what proportion of it is the work of women? As a good test, we may turn to the “Golden Treasury,” that collection of lyrics edited by the late Professor Palgrave with unerring skill. It was first published in 1861, and its compiler excluded from it all work by poets alive at that time. The total number of pieces judged worthy a place in the collection is 339. Of these no more than five are the work of women. Mrs. Browning and Miss Rossetti were *hors concours*, being alive when the “Golden Treasury” was put together. Why did the female

sex fail to cultivate the muse ? If you inquire why so few of them painted great pictures or composed music, the answer may be that these forms of art can only be practised successfully as the result of long study and technical training, which were denied to the ladies ; institutions such as the Slade School and the College of Music are essentially modern. But the art of verse-writing can be acquired anywhere ; for it are needed a certain natural gift, a power of observation, some knowledge of literature—things which (to quote the Latin Grammar) “ common are to either sex.” True, the feminine brain has, apparently, its limitations ; it seems incapable of the greatest creative work, and we may doubt if any quantity of education (or even the possession of the franchise) will lead to the appearance of a female Shakespeare or Beethoven. Yet at the present day a vast quantity of verse, and of very good verse, is being written by women. Why were there scarcely half a dozen poetesses before 1850 ?



Possibly because women were the docile slaves of convention. To write verse—or, at any rate, to publish verse—was reckoned outside the category of feminine deeds. Thus, a woman might be a painter but not a sculptor ; she might play the spinet but not the violin. A thousand such artificial rules limited her activities, and she did not

dream of setting them at defiance. For one thing, it would not occur to her to do so, unless she were very much out of the ordinary ; for another, if she *did* indulge in any practice of which her dear mamma disapproved, her dear mamma could give her a distinctly unpleasant time. Parental authority was a grim fact in those days, to be enforced if necessary with starvings and beatings. Yet it is difficult to understand why the making of verse should have been thought "ungenteel." No, the more probable explanation is that to write in rhyme and metre was reckoned a feat of which women were constitutionally incapable, and therefore scarcely any of them attempted it. This view appears to be supported by the manner in which the work of the very few lady poets was received. They do not seem to have been upbraided for their daring ; on the contrary, their work was given more praise than, on critical grounds, it deserved. Various men poets addressed eulogistic odes to them, naïvely expressing not so much a favourable judgment upon the technical worth of the poetess' lines as a feeling of amaze that any woman should be able to write verse at all. Here, for example, is a rather scarce volume : "Poems. By the Incomparable Mrs. K. P. London, printed by *J. G.* for *Rich. Marriott*, at his Shop under *S. Dunstan's* Church in Fleet Street, 1664." By way of preface, there is an ode, by Abraham Cowley (a very considerable poet), "to the most excellently accom-

plish'd Mrs. K. P. upon her poems,” opening thus :—

We allow'd your beauty, and we did submit
To all the tyrannies of it.
Ah, cruel Sex ! will you depose us too in Wit ?
Orinda does in that too reign,
Does Man behind her in proud triumph draw,
And cancel great *Apollo's* Salick Law.



Mrs. K. P., in fact, was almost the first English lady to write any notable verse. Her maiden name was Katherine Fowler ; she was born in London on January 1, 1631. At the age of sixteen she married a Welshman named James Philips ; by the time she was twenty she was known as a verse-writer ; she died when but thirty-four. The first authorised edition of her works was published in 1667, three years after her death. This was widely popular, and was often reprinted ; copies of it are by no means rare. But my edition is the piratical one issued shortly before her death ; some clever rogue contrived to collect MS. copies of the verses which she circulated among her friends, and Mr. “ J. G.”—who prudently suppresses his name—printed them. (And here, in parenthesis, a warning may be added for the book-buyer who comes across a copy of this volume. It ends, apparently, on p. 236, with a “ *Finis.*” But after this should follow other pages which most copies lack : one of *errata*, and then five more—the pagination being continued from

the rest of the book—filled by an “Ode on Mr. Abraham Cowley’s Retirement,” with another “Finis” at the end of it. If you can find a copy *with* these extra pages going cheap, you will be well advised to buy it.) But it was not as “Mrs. K. P.” that this lady, who had the audacity to “cancel great Apollo’s Salick Law,” was best known. Among the literary folk of her day she was famous as “the matchless Orinda.” This fashion of a Latinised pseudonym gave much innocent pleasure to the literary folk of the Restoration period.



They banded themselves together in “Societies,” and each member received a fancy name on admission. Thus the matchless Orinda wrote an Ode to “the excellent Mrs. Anne Owen, upon her receiving the name of Lucasia, and admission into our Society, Dec. 28, 1651,” which begins in this lofty style :—

We are complete, and Fate hath now
No greater blessing to bestow ;
No, the dull World must now confess
We have all worth, all happiness ;
Annal of State are trifles to our fame
Now 'tis made sacred by Luca's name.

Sir Edward Deering was “the noble Silvander,” Mrs. Mary Aubrey was “Rosania” ; others of the company were called “Philaster,” “Antenor,” “Palaemon,” “Philoclea,” “Ardelia,” and “Cra-

tander.” To all these the matchless Orinda indited poems, but Lucasia was her greatest friend, causing an emotion that got the better of grammar :—

I did not live, until this time
Crown'd my felicity,
When I could say without a crime
I am not thine, but Thee !

since, as she explains, Lucasia is Orinda's life and soul. The final stanza has some neatness :—

Then let our Flame still light and shine,
And no false fear control,
As innocent as our Design,
Immortal as our soul.

Indeed, Orinda's best verses, generally speaking, are addressed to her numerous friends. There are two rather fierce pieces about the iniquity of a man with the prosaic name of “Mr. J. Jones” —“To the truly competent judge of Honour, Lucasia, upon a scandalous Libel made by J. Jones,” and “To Antenor, on a paper of mine which J. Jones threatens to publish to prejudice him”—in one of which Mr. J. Jones is politely described as “This Magazine of Hell.” But for the rest her lines flow equably, lauding her friends in terms the extravagance of which but adds to their old-world charm. Even the titles have the same flavour ; for instance, “To the right Honourable Alice Countess of Carbury, on her enriching Wales with her presence.” But as an example of

Orinda at her best let me quote this tender and felicitous epitaph, placed on a child's grave :—

Vertue's Blossom, Beauty's Bud,
The Pride of all that's fair and good,
By Death's fierce hand was snatched hence
In her state of Innocence ;
Who by it this advantage gains,
Her wages got without her pains.



Well, we are remote now from Orinda's age and those polite Societies in which the members sang each other's praises in tranquil strains. Yet, apart from their intrinsic worth, her poems serve to correct the popular delusion that the whole of English society after the Restoration adopted the manners and customs in vogue at the Court of Charles II. Doubtless the best-known lyrical writers of that time—Sir Charles Sedley, Sir George Etherege, the Earls of Buckingham and Dorset—were not people of strict morality, to put the case mildly. We must admit, too, that the only other well-known authoress of the age—Mrs. Aphra Behn—had an unsavoury reputation. But it was the age also of Henry Vaughan and Mrs. Philips ; it was an age when there was no lack of quiet people leading exemplary lives. To judge the national character of that period by the morality of the Court wits would be no more reasonable than to estimate the standard of our own days by the Yahoos in the fashionable restau-

rants on New Year's Eve. We have no counterpart of the matchless Orinda, but we have a considerable number of poetesses who write quite admirable verse—verse the high merit of which is not, perhaps, generally appreciated. Anyone wishing to study it may be recommended to acquire a volume published about a year ago by Messrs. Herbert & Daniel—“ *A Book of Verse by Living Women*,” edited by Lady Margaret Sackville, herself the writer of some graceful poems. Twenty-five ladies are represented in its pages, and the list is not exhaustive—the work of “ E. Nesbit ” and Mrs. Byron, to give but two examples, should certainly have found a place in it. It suffices, however, to show the very interesting development of feminine verse in modern times. This is no longer merely imitative ; it begins to have a well-marked character of its own. We might be puzzled, were these poems unsigned, to distinguish between them, to attribute each to its own author ; but it would be difficult also to mistake any of them for the work of men. This means that feminine verse shows, as it should do, its distinctive note. It is apt still to be faulty in technique ; oddly enough, most women seem to have an imperfect ear for rhyme—Mrs. Browning and Miss Rossetti were signal instances. But their lyrics have charm, and are essentially feminine ; a little wistful, sometimes tragic ; full of subtle emotion, hinted at rather than fully expressed ;

keenly sensitive to the messages of nature ; reticent and delicate ; each poem aiming—so wisely !—at one definite effect, and rarely failing in some measure to gain it.



To turn to masculine poetry, let me invite your attention to a rather curious thing I chanced upon of late. Do you know Oliver Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World" ? In the fourteenth paper of that diverting series his Chinaman attends the meeting of a poets' club, where one of the authors declaims, amid the derision of his fellows, some lines evidently intended by Goldsmith as a burlesque. Here are some of them :—

There in a lonely room, from bailiffs snug,
The muse found Scroggen stretch'd beneath a rug ;
A window patch'd with paper lent a ray
That dimly shew'd the state in which he lay ;
The sandy floor that grits beneath the tread ;
The humid wall with paltry pictures spread. . . .
The morn was cold, he views with keen desire
The rusty grate unconscious of a fire :
With beer and milk arrears the frieze was scor'd,
And five crack'd tea-cups dress'd the chimney board :
A night-cap deck'd his brows instead of bay—
A cap by night—a stocking all the day.

Why, here, written fifty years before "The Borough" was published, is the very style, language, and versification of George Crabbe ! Look at "The Dwellings of the Poor" in "The Borough" ; compare

A window patch'd with paper lent a ray
That dimly shew'd the state in which he lay

which is Goldsmith jesting, with

That window view !—oil'd paper and old glass
Stain the strong rays, which, though impeded, pass,

which is Crabbe in earnest, and Goldsmith's

And five crack'd tea-cups dress'd the chimney board,

with Crabbe's

Above the fire, the mantel-shelf contains
Of china-ware some poor unmatch'd remains,
There many a tea-cup's gaudy fragment stands,

and, apart from such verbal coincidences, the ambling metre (so unlike that of “*The Deserted Village*”), the particularity of description, the very name “*Scroggen*”—all are Crabbe's! Crabbe, of course, knew his Goldsmith, and wrote his “*Village*” as a protest against his predecessor's “*Sweet Auburn*.” But certainly he would not frame his style upon a mock-poem of Goldsmith's; it is doubtful if he had even read “*The Citizen of the World*.” Was there some forgotten bard of 1760 whom Goldsmith was burlesquing in the lines quoted? Anyhow, here you have the facts; Crabbe heaped scorn upon the facile couplets, the conventional pictures, of Goldsmith; but fifty years earlier, when Crabbe was but six years old, Goldsmith had written what reads like a parody, and an uncommonly good parody, of Crabbe! Surely this is one of the curiosities of literature.

Games and Literature

THERE are many games which have a quite considerable literature of their own. That collector, for instance, who set himself to buy all the books about cricket would find that he had a full library and (unless he were a millionaire) an empty purse long before his quest was complete. The theme is dear to the Muse ; the most unskilful of versifiers takes heart when he sees how beautifully " cricket " and " wicket," " catch " and " match," lend themselves to his purpose. In the days of the olden giants—Daft, Caffyn, Nyren, Alfred Mynn—the more important matches were celebrated in long epic poems, written with much solemnity, rather in the style of Mr. Pope's " Iliad." More recently Mr. Norman Gale wrote " Cricket Songs " worthy of their high theme. If " the groves, once vocal, now are dumb," if our contemporary songsters seldom warble about cricket matches, their silence may easily be explained. Far too much of what the newspapers, with unintentional irony, call " first-class " cricket is unspeakably dull. Again, the modern vocabulary of the game does not lend itself to verse. What rhyme is there for " googlie " ?

Of cricket prose, however, the supply is still plentiful; books teaching us how to play the game, articles describing games played, fiction, with an imaginary match as its *motif*. I am a little tired, by the way, of one story which, with trifling variations, contrives to appear in some magazine or other every cricket season. It is a tale of a village match, and the chances are that the village is called Slocombe or Puddleton. There is much excitement over collecting the team, for the local champion is disabled. At the eleventh hour a "dark horse" appears. He masquerades under an *alias*, but in truth he is (as the reader immediately divines) a famous county player. Of course he goes in when the game is apparently lost; he scores at an incredible speed, and his final hit for six, made on the stroke of time, completes his century, wins the match, and (by some mysterious process) enables the hero to marry the heroine. One grows weary, as I said, of this tale, which is not even remotely true to life. If, in sober fact, your county cricketer does figure in a village match, the chances are that he is ignominiously bowled first ball.



One may doubt if a worse description of a cricket match was ever written than that which figures in an early chapter of "Pickwick." Poor Master Dickens was employed in a blacking factory

when he should have been learning how to bat, while his half-holidays were spent with his father in the debtors' prison at Marshalsea. Later he was sent for a short time to a day-school, but cricket was not included in the curriculum. Probably he never handled a bat in his life, and his description of the match between Muggleton and Dingley Dell is a thing to marvel at. "The interest became intense when Mr. Dumkins and Mr. Podder walked to their respective wickets. Mr. Luffey, the highest ornament of Dingley Dell, was pitched to bowl against the redoubtable Dumkins, and Mr. Struggles was selected to do the same kind office for the hitherto unconquered Podder." The idea that each batsman should be provided with his own bowler seems original; what would happen if a single were scored, so that the batsmen changed ends, during the first over? "Mr. Luffey retired a few paces behind the wicket of the passive Podder, and applied the ball to his right eye for several seconds," an unusual gesture. Mr. Podder "blocked the doubtful balls, missed the bad ones, took the good ones, and sent them flying to all parts of the field," whereas most batsmen find it easier to score off the bad balls. "When Dumkins was caught out, and Podder caught out, All-Muggleton had notched some fifty-four, while the score of the Dingley Dellers was as blank as their faces." Nothing is said about the rest of the innings; to "declare" with a total of fifty-four

seems a trifle rash—besides, the law about declaration was not yet invented. The truth is that Dickens felt himself to be floundering dreadfully among the technicalities of which he knew nothing, and so hastened to bring the game to an end. “The advantage was too great to be recovered. In vain did the eager Luffey, and the enthusiastic Struggles, do all that skill and experience could suggest to regain the ground Dingley Dell had lost in the contest ; it was of no avail ; and in an early period of the winning game Dingley Dell gave in, and allowed the superior prowess of All-Muggleton.” In other words, Muggleton scored fifty-four for two, whereupon Dingley Dell, having lost a few wickets cheaply, “resigned” after the fashion of a chess-player—and this was Dickens’s notion of a cricket match !



Of all games, however, golf—not the royal and ancient, but the modern and democratic variety—has collected round itself the largest body of literature. There are countless manuals of instruction, and if any rather bad player wishes to become quite hopelessly bad, he has only to study one of these books—all of them are equally efficacious—and to bear in mind its counsels when he is on the links. If you read a patent-medicine advertisement, you will realise that you have been suffering for years from almost every ailment ; if you read the

golf manual, you learn that your own style embodies every conceivable fault. But the results of trying to cure yourself with Piffles' Popular Pillules, or with the new stance, the new grip, and the new swing are seldom satisfactory. The one chapter of the modern golf book upon which I look with superior scorn is that which offers to teach me how to put slice on my ball. I can, and do, cause the majority of my drives to curl towards cover-point without any professional assistance; the ball whistles near the head of some savage-faced golfer striding towards quite another hole. Golfers, as such, are not humorous, which is the reason, perhaps, why a second type of golf book—the collection of jests and anecdotes about the game—is so terribly depressing; most of them are of the vintage 1880, or thereabouts. But the most characteristic feature of golf literature is the weekly article adorning almost every newspaper, from "The Times" downwards. That the writers should contrive to fill a column week by week, and year by year, is a tribute to their ingenuity. When other themes fail, the golf specialist can either (*a*) discuss the rules, which seem to be as unlike those of the Medes and Persians as possible; or (*b*) he can (literally) take another course—he can describe some links he has lately visited. Then you find him at his golden best. "The third is a sporting little hole, of some 550 yards. Against a strong headwind indifferent players may prefer to take a

wooden club. But you will probably find that an easy iron-shot will take you most of the way, and then a chip-shot over a wood, two bunkers, and a river will land you on the green for a comfortable three." Alas ! golf on paper and golf on the links are very different games !



While there are cricket songs, and golf songs, and even football songs in abundance, tennis (meaning lawn-tennis) has been strangely neglected by the Muse. Will not some bard arise to hymn its praises ? Cricket is well enough for young people with unlimited leisure. Afterwards it is a snare and a delusion. Suppose that, needing exercise, I play in a cricket match. What happens ? I may get more than enough, while Dumkins and Podder send the ball "flying to all parts of the field." Quite probably, though, I am sent in to bat, put a ball into point's hands, and then kick my heels in the pavilion for the rest of the day while other people make innumerable runs. That, for a person with scanty leisure who wants exercise, is not the best way of spending an afternoon. Tennis treats its devotees more kindly. In cricket you make your one bad stroke and are done for ; at tennis you miss an easy smash and are annoyed, but the next minute a brilliant cross-volley "comes off" and your sadness vanishes. Instead of spending a whole day on a cricket match, with the

chance of passing three-quarters of the time in watching other people bat, you are quite certain of getting a satisfactory amount of exercise in two or three hours. Golf is well enough in its way, but it does not make one hot—except in regard to temper. Racquets and “squash” *do* raise the temperature, but they are not often to be had, and the ideal game must be played in the fresh air. People who deride tennis as “pat-ball” show “ignorance, madam, sheer ignorance,” as Dr. Johnson said. A five-set single played under modern conditions is as severe a test of physical fitness as anyone could wish. No doubt some people’s ideas of the game are based upon that melancholy burlesque still to be witnessed occasionally at garden-parties, where the net, without a centre-stay, is at any height; the balls are a year old, and “cleaned” so forcibly as to be much under weight; the wavering base-line of the court is within a yard or two of the laurel hedge, and each set has to be followed by a prolonged grovelling for errant balls in the bushes. This bears about the same relation to real lawn-tennis as does rounders at an elementary school to county cricket.



Luckily, there are many private courts nowadays which are quite excellent. A few years ago one saw such lawns desecrated by horrible croquet hoops, a spectacle fit for tears. Then foolish people

asserted that tennis was "going out"; in point of fact, it was never more popular than it is to-day. Given, then, a really good court, a fine day, and a keen men's double, and one can be certain of an hour or two's sheer enjoyment. The smooth, freshly mown lawn is fragrant in the sunshine; its broad white lines and the snowy new balls make an agreeable colour-effect upon the green sward. This season, unhappily, most of us have had little but mud-tennis, a game much inferior to lawn-tennis, played when rain is falling from a leaden sky, the balls are black and heavy, and the players are apt to slide and sit down suddenly on the miry soil. A tournament week in bad weather, with the melancholy-looking courts and bedraggled tents, is *not* wholly delightful; its sorrows might be chanted in doleful verse. But the tournament in favourable conditions is a cheerful scene, and novel writers, who are so fond of the golf links and the cricket ground, might utilise it with great effect. I do not remember to have read even a short story about a tennis tournament, though human nature is often exhibited at it in various marked ways, and the "love interest," still sought by many writers of fiction, is not always absent from the mixed-doubles event. Humorous incident is common, awaiting the writer who can use it, and tragedy too—as of the benevolent man who, with the haziest knowledge of the game, undertakes to umpire a handicap single between two fiery-

tempered rivals, one of whom owes one-sixth and the other receives five-sixths of fifteen. Yet, confusing as its method of scoring is to the inexpert, lawn-tennis is not one of those games the rules of which are constantly being thrown into the melting-pot. Its devotee is well content with tennis as it is ; to love it, he finds, is a conservative education.

Hot-Weather Reading

THE science of literary dietetics, I think, has not been studied as it deserves. Obliging gentlemen have supplied us with lists of "the best books," heedless of the truth that a book which is first-rate fare in December may be quite unpalatable in July. . . . Stay, that sentence must be re-cast. Creatures of tradition, we speak still as if the old climatic laws remained, as if the modern Christmas were not often warm, and mid-July piercingly cold. There is, then—to put the truth more wisely—hot-weather reading and cold-weather reading, each a class apart from the other. On a quite scorching day you would not lunch off pork-chops and suet-pudding. Yet many people will attempt books which are the literary equivalent of steaming pork-chops when the thermometer stands at eighty degrees in the shade, and complain if they prove indigestible! Recognising the distinction, let us talk to-day about hot-weather books. I wish I knew that it would be hot when you read this page, so that it might have a certain timeliness. Probably your judgment upon it, as upon other things, will vary with the mood

and the weather in which you read it. On a beautiful day of sunshine, when the world is using you well, you may be led to think this a tolerable paper. If, on the other hand, the sky is one dull space of mist, the rain descends without pause, you have had an annoying letter, and your rubber shares (like the rain) are falling steadily—why, then the chances are that you will throw the thing aside and say “Psha!” That, at least, is what people say in books. Personally, I’ve always longed to hear someone say “Psha”—if only to learn how exactly the word is pronounced—and, so far, the wish has remained ungratified.



Anyhow, whatever the weather may be when you read this, it is hot enough as I write. In fact, were Parliament not sitting, probably we should be passing through a “heat-wave.” How has Parliament, you ask, a refrigerating influence? That I cannot say, but it is true that the weather is rarely “exceptional” when the faithful Commons are assembled. The thermometer may be as high as you like (or dislike), yet you will find no reference in the papers to its behaviour outside the prosaic forecast-man’s column, with its “temperature above normal.” When Parliament is resting, a lower temperature will suffice to cause a column or two on the central page, headed “The Heat-Wave.” Then you have, without extra charge,

the opinion of "an eminent Harley Street practitioner": a wonderful person, always ready to be interviewed, if other copy be scarce. Alas that he persists in remaining anonymous! It would be a joy to meet him. But (for newspaper purposes) he must live in Harley Street; no other place of residence need apply. In the winter (Parliament being "up" for the Christmas recess) he is consulted as to the prevalence of influenza. Yes, he tells the interviewer, cases are numerous, and he has a strikingly novel cure to suggest. It is to stay in bed, keep warm, and drink ammoniated quinine. When the heat-wave has swept upon us his advice is equally remarkable. "How to keep cool?" says the eminent specialist, as reported in the papers. "Much can be done by observing a few simple precautions. Avoid drinking mulled port at breakfast-time. Exercise must be taken in moderation; if you run half a mile to catch a train, you are almost certain to feel warmer afterwards. Remember, too, that dress is most important. Directly the thermometer reaches seventy degrees in the shade, fur-lined overcoats should be discarded." And so forth. But there is no space for the eminent physician and the rest of the column when political affairs are pressing; consequently, there can be no heat-wave at such times. This curious phenomenon reminds one of another. Have you noticed how thin your daily paper is on a Bank Holiday?

Somehow or other all the news is given on eight pages, instead of a dozen or more. One would suppose that an average number of important things must be happening in the world which need to be described. But, because the staff wishes to take a holiday, apparently they do not happen. This coincidence is impossible in the light of dry fact. The true explanation must be that the journalists, bent on their holiday, have no leisure to invent things. So one arrives at a new kind of Berkeleyan philosophy, and discovers that, apart from the consciousness (or inventiveness) of the journalists, nothing ever happens at all.



But all this is a digression ; my subject, you may remember, is "hot-weather reading." First, perhaps, we must define "hot weather." There are at least two varieties. The type which we are experiencing to-day (when this page is being written, I mean ; you may read it in a snow-storm) can be described only as horrible. The sky is dull and lowering ; the sun has been invisible for days past. A dense pall of vapour shrouds the hills. The air has lost all its oxygen. ("Impossible," you say ? No, it's true enough for all practical purposes.) Everything you touch is sticky. The least effort is exhausting. You walk across the road to the pillar-box and return with, to speak poetically, a beaded brow. You

meet a friend, and he remarks that it is "close." He does not say what is close, or to what it is close. He thinks we need a thunder-storm to clear the air—oblivious of the fact that we have had about a dozen thunder-storms in the last three days and that they have not cleared the air in the least . . . What one should read in this weather I cannot at all imagine. If we do read, we shall be unkind and unjust in our criticism. Unhappy author, whose book is reviewed in such weather ! Much better to read nothing ; the happiest lot would be to sit quite still and gasp. . . . This weather makes one feel that nothing ever has mattered, or matters now, or will matter.



Let me cheer myself by thinking of another type of hot weather—the sort of weather that we count upon so eagerly, which comes so rarely ! The day begins with a dew-drenched lawn, and a thin cool mist, and the music of birds. (Tennyson, that almost faultless observer, went wrong when he spoke of "the earliest pipe of half-awakened birds." Anyone who has passed a sleepless night in the country knows better. At the grey dawn, just as you are beginning to doze, a thrush near your window breaks the silence. There is no "tuning-up," no "pipe of half-awakened birds" ; with startling suddenness he sends forth his first note, at the top of his voice. Another thrush in

the distance replies ; other birds join in, and good-bye to your chance of sleep !) Only as the last streak of vapour rolls away on the hillside are the birds silent. Hotter each moment grows the sun ; there is a shifting shimmer of heat over the grass, as the last trace of moisture is drawn up from it. The morning breeze, with its touch of coolness, passes away. In the noontide blaze there is a curious stillness ; even the bees seem to be silent, and all the land swelters in the heat. So the hours pass ; the morning changes to afternoon, with its dim feeling of experience and wise meditation. Slowly the sun declines, setting at last in a blaze of glory, when once more the birds sing, and a gentle breeze stirs the air, so that as you walk you step out of intense heat into a patch of coolness, and then back into heat again. In the west the radiance fades slowly, till at last comes dusk, with its message of infinite peace. Great moths flutter here and there, a cockchafer buzzes along its path ; the breeze is heavy with the scent of hay ; the leaves rustle and murmur in tranquil content. And so in a soft twilight the night falls, and a great star brightens above, and with a happy sigh the earth settles itself to sleep . . . and the last word of the day is a promise of a morrow as fair.

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How vain is this, or any, attempt to paint in words the beauty of a perfect summer day ! Let

us return to our original question : on such a day, supposing you have leisure, what are the books to read ? It is a mistake to think that, because you feel disinclined for stern effort, any rubbish will serve. One would not recommend austere works of history or philosophy, demanding great activity of the reader's mind. Yet the book must be strong enough to hold his attention, and to do this, despite the heat, must have real worth. Supposing you wish for an artificial sense of coolness, a volume of polar travels—Shackleton's or Nansen's—will be an admirable choice. Or there is Mr. Henley's "Ballade made in the Hot Weather," of which a stanza shall be quoted :—

Fountains that frisk and sprinkle
The moss they overspill ;
Pools that the breezes crinkle ;
The wheel beside the mill,
With its wet, weedy frill ;
Wind-shadows in the wheat ;
A water-cart in the street ;
The fringe of foam that girds
An island's ferneries ;
A green sky's minor thirds—
To live, I think of these !

Verse, indeed, makes excellent hot-weather reading ; Tennyson's "Princess," for example, is almost ideal for the purpose. You are sufficiently awake to appreciate its wonderful charm of words, while you are made uncritical enough by the heat to suffer undisturbed the strange doings of people who fight with armour and battle-axes, yet discuss

the nebular hypothesis and make an expedition "to take the dip of certain strata to the north." Tennyson designed the thing, no doubt, as a polemic on the subject of "women's rights." On a hot day you are perfectly indifferent to such discussions. At other times it might occur to you that the Prince was a bit of a prig, and the Princess unjustified in her *volte-face*. The heat helps you to greater wisdom, to a sane enjoyment of the poem for its own sake. How matchless are its pictures and similes, how magically good the technique of its verse, how exquisite those little lyrics which separate the cantos! Other things of the same author are good hot-weather reading—"The Lotos-eaters," for example—but "The Princess" is best of all. Another verse-writer whose work never tastes so well as on a hot summer day is Mr. Austin Dobson. Browning, to take an obvious contrast, should be read in the autumn or winter. Compare again the works of two great novelists. Thackeray's are quite suitable for hot weather; that is just the time for dipping once more into the pages of "Vanity Fair" or "Pendennis"; whereas Dickens's books are absolutely inappropriate to a summer's day. To be enjoyed, they must be read in the winter, and as near Christmas-time as possible. I could not wish for a better illustration of my truth that there are hot-weather and cold-weather books. You take up "Pickwick" or the "Christmas Carol"; do you imagine that

you will relish it as much when you read it on a blazing afternoon as when the snow is falling and your chair is beside the fire? Or will Tennyson's "Princess" have the charm for you that it possesses as you read it under the summer trees if you attempt it on a foggy day of winter?



Books into which one can dip at will are excellently suited for the hot weather. Pepys' "Diary" is a perfect example; Evelyn is more heavy-handed, and Boswell's "Life of Johnson" is not quite so good for a high temperature as Pepys. The "Essays of Elia" almost deserve a place, but then they taste equally well at any season, whereas some of Stevenson's papers—those in "Virginibus Puerisque," for instance—charm one more in the summer than at any other time. Addison's "Spectator," especially the papers which tell of dear Sir Roger, are delightful to read in the shade. Mr. Kipling is a cold-weather author; he is too strenuous for high temperatures, and one of his Indian sketches—"The City of Dreadful Night"—can make one feel hot in mid-winter. Of modern novelists, Mr. Hardy's earlier books suggest themselves; but I doubt if one wants to read right through any long story, even "Far from the Madding Crowd," on a really hot day. Better for the purpose is some tale, less well constructed from a technical point of view, which is

compact of episodes, so that one can read a chapter here and there without feeling any constraint to plod one's way through from the first to the last. Yet the book must be so familiar that there is no anxiety about the plot ; anxiety heats the blood and mars composure. Therefore, for hot-weather purposes, a detective story, such as "The Moonstone," would be all wrong ; "Lorna Doone," on the contrary, would be an admirable choice. . . . Here, then, are six books to have beside you in your hammock or deck-chair : "The Princess," Mr. Dobson's "Old World Idylls," "Pepys," "Vanity Fair," "Lorna Doone," and, according to your mood, either the eighteenth-century "Spectator" or a volume of Stevenson's Essays. New books are to be shunned till the weather is cooler ; if good, they will excite you too much ; if bad, they will bore you too utterly. We want equable reading ; this is not the time for unfamiliar faces ; give us the company of old and beloved friends.

An October View

ABOUT July of each year our newspapers provide us with a fine crop of articles on "The Ideal Vacation," "How to Spend the Holidays," "The Art of Staying at the Seaside," and so forth. Really these essays would have much more value were the writing of them delayed until October. Then the scribes would have a store of fresh experience to their hand ; lessons, pleasant or otherwise, taught them in August and September could be set down for the instruction of fellow-mortals. If you wait till July to describe the holiday spent nearly twelve months earlier, it is almost certain that, without any wish to deceive, you will mislead your readers. By that time the idealising process will have begun ; the annoyances and failures will have been forgotten, while the pleasures will be as vivid as ever. How strange, yet how blessed, is this law of human nature, that the recollection of agreeable things does outlive that of things unpleasant ! No doubt you were very happy at school, or in the years that followed schooldays ; yet the chances are, if you could be taken at your word (like Mr. Bultitude in "Vice Versâ"), and put

back into them, you would be astonished at the difference between the period as it actually was and the period as you see it now, idealised by memory. It is not that you have come to exaggerate the delights; they were quite as real and substantial as you suppose. Only there were drawbacks; bothers and worries and discomforts which have been blotted out in merciful oblivion. This process works swiftly, and so it is that Mr. X's description of his holiday, penned a year after it took place, must be received with caution. In eloquent language—the language of July—he will assert that nowhere is there a spot which can rival Shingleford, the scene of his holiday last August. Nowhere else is the air so good, the country so picturesque, the hotel or lodging-house proprietor so courteous, so reasonable, etc. etc. Now, if the editor who employs our friend X wanted a really truthful article, which readers could trust without reserve, he should seize the pilgrim on the evening of his return home, should immure him in his study, should make him set down there and then his opinion of Shingleford as a holiday resort. His essays might be less literary, and the eulogy of the hotel-keeper—with whom only that morning he had waged battle concerning the bill—would be modified; but his readers would not be lured to Shingleford next year under false pretences.



Perhaps, however, the editor would perform a yet greater service to mankind if he refused to print any holiday articles. Shingleford is, or is not, a charming place. If it is not, no one wants to be decoyed thither. If it is, no greater disservice can be done it than to make it fashionable. How extraordinary is the instinct which leads people who see one another through all the rest of the year to herd together for the few weeks of the holidays ! By some means—perhaps by a newspaper article—an inhabitant of Barchester, that residential town in the provinces, is convinced of the charms of Shingleford as a holiday place. Forthwith he tells all his neighbours, and then for a season or two Shingleford becomes a sort of colony of Barchester during the holidays. Afterwards Pwllbryncwmpwll, a charming Welsh watering-place, is discovered to have superior attractions; thither, accordingly, the folk of Barchester emigrate *en masse* when August comes. Could any plan be more preposterous ? Among my neighbours at home, let us suppose, is Jones, madly keen on “tariff reform” ; Brown, whose one topic of conversation with me is a cousin of mine he met in the dim past ; Miss Robinson, great at Syrian antiquities ; Smith, who has convinced himself, and wants to convince me, that in the general adoption of the Patent Anti-microbic Drainage System lies the only hope of our Empire.



Well, Jones, Brown & Co. are excellent people—in their own place. At home I listen with reverence to Jones's convincing figures of exports; nothing can alloy the charm of Brown's reminiscences, of Miss Robinson's learning. As for Smith, his disquisitions on drains are not less than masterly. But, when I go for a holiday, I "want a change," as the doctors say; and a change of persons is quite as important as a change of place. Supposing that I bow the knee to fashion, pack my portmanteau, hurry off to Shingleford. Next morning I take a turn on the esplanade. "Hullo!" calls out a familiar voice, "so you've found your way here too? I say, have you looked at the last Board of Trade returns? Well, I've the figures in my pocket, and they prove our case up to the hilt, sir, up to the hilt. As for that Cobden fraud"—and so on. An hour later I escape, only to meet Brown, who finds that Shingleford reminds him strangely of the spot where he and my cousin met. I descend to the beach; under that large umbrella sits Miss Robinson, who looks up from the "*Journal of Syrian Antiquities*" as I try to slink past, beckons to me imperiously, and insists upon reading aloud a few pages from her light and airy journal. I come down to dinner at the hotel; an impressive voice is declaiming loudly upon the faulty nature of the Shingleford sewers. Heavens! it is Smith himself. Do you suppose that this kind of experience adds to the pleasure of a holiday? Yet,

upon my word, it seems to be what many people like, else why should they go to the same seaside place as their neighbours ? The gregarious instinct is fatal to a holiday of the right kind. I care not very much where I go ; but what does matter is that Smith, Brown, Jones, and Miss Robinson should go somewhere else.



And, as one needs a change of place and persons, so also it is desirable to obtain, if one can, a change of period. You may protest that this is impossible, unless Mr. H. G. Wells would be kind enough to lend you his "Time machine." Personally, I have no wish to borrow that vehicle, which projected its inventor forward, as you may remember, into a future when men and women had been transformed into butterflies and slugs. But no such aid to flight is necessary. Time is only a figment of the mind, as the metaphysicians assure us. The clock may tell you at the end of a singularly unpleasant visit to your dentist that you have reclined in his uneasy chair for half an hour only ; you know quite well that your visit lasted for a year or two. And, really, different periods can be found in different places. Let us suppose that you live in an average English town. Do you want to go forward fifty years ? Then visit New York, and the conditions of life there are pretty well those that may obtain in your native place *circa*

1960. Or would you like to go backwards—a far pleasanter experience? Then make your way into some remote village, and there you are in the year 1800. That is the real virtue of staying in such surroundings; you have changed, I repeat, not merely place and persons, but period. One afternoon, not long since, a friend with whom I was staying in the country took me for a walk; it had several purposes, but one of them was to visit a remote village church where is an ancient and beautiful painted rood-screen. While we were there, the venerable incumbent came in. He was dressed in the easy fashion of the country clergy of the past; he was accompanied by his dog, which, quite as a matter of course, he brought into the church with him. Then, while the dog reposed on a pew, the old gentleman sat down at the tiny organ—an instrument with huge draw-stops and pedals that would puzzle the modern executant—produced great folios of music printed with a “figured bass,” and played Handel to us.



So might one have heard the music in Handel's own time. As it sounded melodiously through the church, and the warm sunlight fell on the screen and ancient tombs, one felt that “time had run back and fetched the age”—well, perhaps not that of gold, but at least that of a period commonly thought to be past recall. Not one touch of

modernity was there to spoil the picture—building, vicar, organ, and music were parts of a convincing whole, in exactly the right key. How ineffective by comparison is the pageant, with its cardboard and tinsel, to reproduce ages that are fled ! The twentieth century had disappeared ; indeed, there are still a vast number of villages to which it will not penetrate for another fifty years. The old customs, the old speech endure : aeroplanes may fly, the North Pole become the crowded haunt of American explorers ; but these things touch not the rustic life. Probably we should be astonished to know how many country folk, by no means without intelligence, have never been in a train, and cannot read or write. My friend, a country parson himself, happened to compliment an old man in the village upon his skill in letters, who explained that someone had seen to his schooling in his youthful days. “ Was it your clergyman ? ” inquired my friend. “ O no, sir,” replied the aged rustic, in all good faith, “ it wasn’t the clergyman ; it was a real gentleman.”



... Well, this is a digression. Our point was, you may remember, that one of the best forms of holiday is one which brings a change of period, and that the chief advantage of staying in a remote village is not the scenery, the air, the butter, or the bacon, but is just this, that you are carried

back fifty or a hundred years. There is no electric light, railway, or telephone; the daily paper, when it arrives in the afternoon, seems an alien strayed from some other world. Of course you must lead a life to suit your surroundings; strenuous sightseeing, and big houses and entertainments, are to be shunned. A little fishing and the smoking of innumerable pipes is to be encouraged. So shall you become supremely indolent; so shall the peace of the leisure possess you; so, if you have work to do, shall it remain unfinished.



Another type of place which seems to promise true leisure—leisure much needed, seldom found in this age—is the university town during vacation time. Charles Lamb wrote an alluring essay on “Oxford in the Vacation.” But things have altered strangely since his day. In theory, it should be easy to write several pages about the tranquillity of the deserted courts and halls; the grey old colleges no longer resounding with youthful voices, but seeming in the silence to brood over their immemorial past; the ghostly stillness of the empty chapels, the infrequent footfall in the streets, and so forth. Not otherwise, as the years pass, as the rioting pleasures of youth leave untenanted the soul . . . you can imagine how sentimental might be the tone of these paragraphs. Yet, if full of poetry, they would be lacking in

truth. Cambridge in vacation time—and probably Oxford is not different—will disappoint you badly if you hope to find there the pause and composure described by Lamb. For one thing, the place is full of Americans bustling about with Baedeker; each hoary wall re-echoes the soft and musical voices for which our cousins across the Atlantic are so justly famed. Delightful people as many of them are, they seem out of place when they scamper through the college courts and halls, bewildering the porter and even the staid Fellows' butler with impertinent questions. And I defy anyone to meditate successfully with Mr. Silas P. Higgs, and Mrs. Higgs, and Miss Sadie Higgs waltzing around. Moreover, Cambridge in the long vacation looks rather like Messina after an earthquake. The main streets, road and pavement, are "up," while the undergraduates are down; the travellers walk through by-ways. The colleges are in the hands of the builders, and one would judge there to be a competition as to which firm can make the greatest mess, and continue making it for the longest time. If this art, or the geology of highways, or the habits of citizens from the United States, attract you, then by all means visit Cambridge out of term time. Otherwise, perhaps, you will be wise to shun it.



Well, most people will have ended their holidays by the time these lines are printed. You have

enjoyed yours, I hope, and are wise enough to get back into harness without kicking. Railway stations give one excellent opportunities of studying human nature, and it has often struck me that of two crowds on the platform—one at the beginning of August, the other half-way through September; the one *en route* to Shingleford, Scotland, or where you will, the other returning—it is the latter, as one might not expect, which is strikingly the more cheerful. The simple truth, we may hope, is that the holiday-makers are much the better for their change; the improvement shows itself in their tempers, and the return to work does not fill them with dismay. Boys and girls, of course, are much more wildly hilarious at the end of term than at the beginning of it. One is very glad that they hate leaving home, that their good-byes are said with a feeling of chokiness they would die rather than admit. Yet the mood doesn't last long, unless they are at the outset of their first term. Just look at the crowd you will find at Waterloo or Paddington when the schools meet again. To say the least, it does not seem to be overwhelmed with grief. There are notes of the holidays to be compared, and rumours of new masters or mistresses to be discussed, and any number of suggestions to be made about the footer or hockey teams. In fact, they are exceedingly cheerful. And that's the spirit, depend upon it, with which to get back to work. To attack

it furiously, as if it were an enemy to be trounced, is a mistake. Begin it sanely, good-temperedly, and even with gaiety. You will look back to the holidays with pleasure, but with no empty regret that they are past; you will be attuned to the shortening evenings and business-like crispness of the October air.

King's Evidence

“PLEASE, sir, it was *'im* that done it”—from twenty throats came the shrill cry; twenty ink-stained fingers wagged denouncingly. An elementary-school teacher must needs be patient, yet even to his endurance there are limits. And when, for the third time that week, you find your nice clean duster, which should have hung pendent from the blackboard, hidden in the coal-box, knotted tightly, and having done evident service as a football, then, as the young master plaintively remarked, you must say that this style of going on is not to be permitted, and you mean that there shall be no possible doubt about *that*. In fact, he was getting well under way with his oration. What further it would have contained of threat or penalty, I know not. No sooner had its general drift become clear to its interested audience, than, as at a signal, it was interrupted by the eager chorus: “Please, sir, it was *'im* that done it.” So far, at least, the master had not expressed the slightest wish to learn the culprit’s name; his speech was in the nature of a collective warning. But each small boy of that class meant to shun the slightest risk of punishment for himself. Each

joined in the cry, each wagged an accusing finger, each enjoyed the obvious discomfort of the criminal thus denounced. . . . A trivial incident, of course, paralleled almost any hour in any elementary school. Yet, somehow, it provoked reflection upon what does seem a fault in our educational scheme. Yes, its worst feature, disfiguring badly the education we provide for the working-classes, is epitomised in the cry: "Please, sir, it was 'im that done it."



For consider how impossible it would be to hear such a remark in a school of a higher grade. "An outrage—a dastardly outrage—has been committed in our midst"—thus one famous head master was wont to begin his allocutions; meaning, perhaps, that a pane of his greenhouse had suffered from an errant stone. And all that followed was regarded by the school—and by him, too, in a way—as a sort of game. His object was to try, by all legitimate means, to trace down the offender. The other side had to defeat this purpose. On the one hand, the master must not use any unworthy trick; on the other, a boy did not think himself entitled to tell lies to save himself—although the ethics of the game permitted him to lie freely in order to shield others. With such tacit understandings, then, the game would be played. But imagine the feelings of the master himself had the boys hastened

to denounce and to deliver up to justice one of their own number ! Indeed, the thing is inconceivable ; “Thou shalt not sneak ” being wellnigh the first commandment of a public-school boy’s code. It is one of the traditions, built up through centuries, which have such binding force ; one of the conventions which influence the whole atmosphere of such schools—and the chief moral force in them is adherence to a kind of glorified conventionalism. A boy quickly realises that this or the other action simply “is not done,” is not in accord with the unwritten law handed down through the ages, is not “playing the game ” ; he accepts this convention, shapes his conduct accordingly, and then impresses it in turn upon those junior to himself. Possibly the ethics of “not sneaking ” may lead sometimes to dubious results ; boys are great casuists, and they will justify almost anything done in order to keep their code inviolate. But its importance is that it recognises the weighty claims of corporate life. A will not inform against B to a master, little as he may love B, because public opinion would disapprove (and express its disapproval in very practical and unpleasant ways), and behind this reason, because A and B are members of the same community.



There are other and better ways, of course, in which the same feeling is shown—by the pride felt

in the school as a whole, by the sense that any success gained by an individual member is an achievement for the community, and, not least, by the keenness over the school's success in games. Critics are apt to find fault with the prominence which games have in school life, while parents are sad because the letters from their boys (and girls) are full of details about the last football or hockey match, and say uncommonly little of "lessons." But, if they would believe it, games *are* lessons, and their importance is enormous. The old theory was that games were useful merely to provide relaxation and to help physical development. They do this, but they do far more—they foster the sense of corporate life. Some, obviously, are more effective than others for this purpose; football and hockey are best of all, because unselfishness is essential to success in them; cricket, too, is excellent, though not quite as good, since it is apt, in these days of "averages," to emphasise individual achievements. Racquets, tennis, fives, and the like stand on a lower level, simply because they do not merge the individual in the side. When one knows something of school life from within, one finds it hard to listen patiently to parental grumbles against "too much importance attached to games." You want your child, O Materfamilias, not merely to learn so much of classics, mathematics, or foreign languages, but to be well educated. Believe, then, that the most

valuable lessons are those not taught in a classroom. Else had you done better to send your boy to a "crammer's," to keep your girl at home, causing her merely to attend lectures and to be coached by a governess. But the great glory of English school life is that it does develop the sense of belonging to and owing a debt towards a community. And that lesson is taught in no other way so effectually as it is by school games. If it be learnt aright it will endure, making your boy or girl a better man or woman when all, or nearly all, the dates, conjugations, and irregular verbs have long since been forgotten.



Perhaps girls need this teaching even more than boys. In many ways they are much better—more naturally docile, keener (taking them as a whole) about their work, more conscientious—but they are apt also to be more self-centred. And the boy does not cease to have a part in a community on leaving school—he goes to the 'Varsity, or joins the Army or Navy, or becomes a member of some organised profession. But most girls are never members of a common body in the same degree when once they have left school. Wherefore I am convinced that girls should be sent to boarding-schools, and not less certain that these should be schools where hockey and cricket are played. "But these games are so unladylike," objects someone.

My dear Madam, pardon me if, like Mr. Burchell, I reply, Fudge ! Rejoice, rather, that the days are almost over when the one outdoor recreation conceded to girls was that of walking along the streets in stately procession. It gave you fresh air, no doubt, and exercise of a sort—but what did it teach you ? On the other hand, that girl of yours at school now, who sends you four triumphant pages over the school's victory in Saturday's hockey-match, who comes home to speak a strange jargon, full of such terms as “ sticks,” “ left-wing,” “ penalty-goals,” and “ taking a corner ”—that girl, my dear lady, is learning a quite magnificent lesson from her games, which will make her not merely a healthier but a better and more unselfish woman. “ That's all right,” comments Paterfamilias, “ provided that games are kept in their proper place.” To which I assent cordially—pre-mising only that “ their proper place ” is in the very fore-front of school-life.



“ But this is mere theorising,” protests Miss Pinkerton—Principal, as you remember, of the Select Academy for Young Ladies. “ How can you presume, Mr. Editor, to lay down the law to us, the heads of our profession ? Really you know nothing about girls' schools ! ” Madam, I beg to differ from you. True, I have never set foot in your academy, though I think I have seen your pupils

taking their walks abroad in "crocodile" fashion, for you disapprove of games. But of some other girls' schools I venture to believe that I know more than most men. I have taught in them, seen much of the girls outside the class-room as well as in it, dined with them, umpired in school matches, coached them (at their request) in their games, and thereby formed some very delightful friendships, as well as making my lessons, as I hope, more effective. And few things can please a teacher more than when his pupils, of their own accord, give him their confidence, and consult him as to internal points connected with the school's life. I have no intention of telling you, or anyone else, all that I have learned in this way; that would be to violate confidences. But you will understand that I have watched with keen interest the influence of the modern system—the adaptation of boys' public-school methods, with monitorial powers entrusted to the sixth form, great prominence attached to games, "colours" given to the school teams, and so on—upon girls, and my verdict upon it is enthusiastically favourable. The lessons of citizenship, of responsibility to the body, of corporate life, which it provides are simply invaluable. In fact, experience has shown me how it paves the way for understanding the social side of the Christian life and the practical duties of Churchmanship.



This seems a very long digression, but it is really relevant to the question raised at the beginning of these notes. School life has failed in one of its chief objects unless it teaches *esprit de corps*. We recognise that truth in the case of higher grade schools, but we seem to have forgotten it where elementary schools are concerned. We are keenly anxious that denominational religious instruction of every type should be supplied in them. We want the secular training to reach a high level of efficiency, and welcome new methods or apparatus that will further this end. And we are alive, rightly enough, to questions of hygiene—warmth, ventilation, suitable desks, and so on. Class-rooms that would be thought good enough at Eton or Harrow are condemned by H.M. Inspectors of elementary schools. But neither by them nor by the managers is the other need recognised. Very little is done to create a feeling for the school, or even for the class, among the pupils. They are, and they remain, individualists. Each fights solely for his own hand. Each works, if he works willingly at all, to gain a prize or an attendance medal for himself. Each will inform against another, not for a hatred of evil or a wish to support authority, but simply to save himself from any risk of punishment. . . . “Please, sir, it was *'im* that done it!”—there we have, in a sentence, the concentrated individualism of these schools. Why it is spoken as a matter of course in an elementary

school, why, come what may, it could never be uttered in a school of a higher grade, is not that the well-to-do have a keener sense of loyalty than the poor, but arises from the fact that the corporate spirit pervading the whole tone of one class of school is utterly absent from the other.



If to infuse this spirit be one of the chief aims of school life, methods of imparting it deserve to be considered. Tommy Jones and Mary Smith learn many and wonderful things in the elementary school of to-day—botany, conchology, and I know not what besides. But if Tommy and Mary leave school without having felt the claims of corporate life, without having once done something consciously for the school rather than for themselves, then I maintain that their education has been a failure. What remedies can be devised? They will work slowly, of course; school traditions cannot be created in a day, and some time will be needed to make *esprit de corps* an ingredient of the atmosphere in elementary schools. Yet the change could be made by degrees, and assuredly it is worth making. Here, as elsewhere, games would be invaluable. There should be matches between neighbouring schools, played in a sportsman-like way. There should be teams for cricket, football, and rounders. If space or expense make such games impossible—and expense ought not to

prove a serious obstacle—at least tugs-of-war can be managed, for the tug-of-war needs only a rope and a handkerchief, while it is almost ideal in teaching children to strive for a side instead of for individual glory. Again, the present scheme of rewards is all wrong. They encourage personal rivalry and individualism ; in the words of a great teacher, “they are unsocial ; they discriminate where we want to solidify ; they feed vanity where we want to inspire companionship.” Likewise they strengthen directly the children’s idea that punctuality, good conduct, and industry are abnormal, can be expected in a few children only, and deserve special recognition by reason of their rarity. And because we, the elders, choose to treat them as abnormal, abnormal they will be. It would be far wiser to award prizes not to individuals but to classes.



These, of course, are mere suggestions, to be modified according to circumstances. But the principle really matters tremendously, and it is high time that we realised the fact. What has been said here of the weekday elementary school applies to Sunday schools also. We are bidden to give lessons on patriotism and the responsibilities of citizenship ; we wish also to teach our children the law of Christian brotherhood. Well, then, we must provide them with opportunities of prac-

tising these lessons in their own community, the school. When we have done that, when we have brought something of the "public-school spirit" into our public elementary schools, we shall get a better return for the huge national expenditure upon education. Untruthfulness of all kinds is to be discouraged sternly, yet, of two evils, I would liefer have heard that class lie heroically to shield one of their number from punishment than have listened to that grimly significant yelp which has furnished a text for these remarks—"Please, sir, it was 'im that done it!"

An Eighteenth Century Vicar

HE was vicar of the parish in the reigns of Anne and the first George : that age of wigs and patches, of ombre and the coffee-house, of the "Spectator" and the ingenious Mr. Pope, of the stout theological folio dedicated to a Person of Quality by his most humble, most grateful, and most obedient servant. Through twenty-two years he served the cure—not a town, as to-day, but a huddle of cottages on the hillside set about the majestic church. Further afield a mansion or two stood among the trees, and a wide prospect of meadow-land shelving toward the river, six miles away ; then he saw a cathedral tower ; beyond it, again, more pastures, and, at the last, a broken line of hills blue in the distance. A grave man I guess him to have been, of a sober and dignified presence, well versed in theological literature, and apt to preach the perils of Socinianism at a length which sent his hearers to comfortable dreams. Small wonder if the villager, who on some errand to the vicarage had caught sight of the bookshelves, returned to speak with awe of parson's learning. Yet it was not all theoretical ; among the tomes were those of a

most practical utility. Did some caitiff presume to haggle over the payment of tithe, the vicar would thunder forth the penalties assigned by statute to such crime. Was any of his people ill, the vicar would prescribe him medicines of a flavour so truculent that none could dare doubt their efficacy. Two hundred years later the source of his knowledge may be disclosed ; he had on his shelves an essay, by the Rev. Charles Leslie, on " The Divine Right of Tithes," and " The Parson's Counsellor," by Sir Simon Degge, Kt., to show by what human means of summons and restraint this divine right could be enforced. He possessed also " The Modern Practice of Physick," after counsel with which he dispensed his draughts and pills. Indeed, he bequeathed these volumes, with a score of others, to his successors in the benefice. Thus it chances that they are beside me now, and that I can invite you to glance with me at a few of their delectable pages.



But, first, what more can we discover of the man himself ? Here, from between the pages of a folio, flutters a scrap of paper, brown with age. It is some four inches square. He has torn it from a letter requesting him, apparently, to publish some banns of marriage. On it he has written references to various texts of Scripture, to be quoted in the course of a sermon, and the final words of that

sermon itself. Here they are : “ I shall say no more now ; but only desire you to joyn with me in prayer to God yt. His Church being always preserved from false pretenders, may be for ever order’d and guided by faithful and true Pastors, thro’ Jes. Chr. our Lord, to Whom wth. ye Ffather & ye Ho.Gh, be all power and glory for ever.” One suspects that he has been pulverising (with the help of certain works in his library) Dr. Samuel Clarke and other assailants of Trinitarian doctrine. The scanty margin is covered with financial calculations—two shillings and sevenpence subtracted from nine shillings and twopence, and so forth. The handwriting testifies to his neatness. Likewise, he was economical ; he kept accounts, and he utilised every chance scrap of paper. Mathematics were not his forte ; he could not work the most elementary sum without having it before him in writing. This is less to be wondered at, however, as his was the poetic mind ; he had the power of imagination, of projecting his thoughts into the future. This was shown not merely by his bequest of books to all future vicars. In addition to this he decreed by his will that one hundred and fifty years after his widow’s decease certain parcels of land in the neighbourhood should become the property of the incumbent for the time being. And as the lady, far younger than himself, survived for thirty-four years after his death, this provision will not benefit the vicar of the parish until the year

1915—by which time, possibly, all private ownership of land may have been abolished. In any case, the property is not of great extent or value. Yet it is pleasant to think of our excellent divine planning that a future vicar should be enriched by his will almost two centuries after the instrument was executed.



He cared more, I think, for the future of the clergy than for the future of the parish church. Annexed originally to a great Benedictine house, it will accommodate some thirteen hundred people, and must have seemed to the Rev. John Webb (such was our eighteenth century divine's homely name), absurdly large for the scanty village population. The superb fifteenth century glass made small appeal to the taste of Queen Anne's reign. Anyhow, through this period the building was allowed to fall into a thoroughly bad state of repair; ivy crept through broken panes, and (in the beautiful phrase of an observer who wrote at the century's end) "the crumbling plaster fell upon the uplifted eye of devotion." I fear that our friend may even have welcomed the decay, in the hope that this building, with its dreadful monastic and papistical traditions, might be replaced before long by an elegant and commodious structure of Georgian design. But he was anxious that, in whatever building they ministered, his

successors should be well-read, and therefore, as I have mentioned, he bequeathed some two dozen volumes to them. "Vicar Webb's Gift to his Successors" they are inscribed, in a later writing. Most of them have been hidden, for I know not how many years, in the vestry-clerk's cupboard; I fear that their donor's wish has been not quite fulfilled. They form an interesting collection; in the aggregate they represent the tools with which a clergyman of the early eighteenth century set about his work. Annotations in Webb's writing show that he himself utilised them carefully. Ten are folios, the others of a smaller size. All are bound in serviceable leather; here are none of your flimsy boards. Many are quite admirably printed. Let us turn over a few of them.



The oldest is Theodore Beza's translation into Latin of the New Testament—his second and amended edition, published in 1598, with a rather unctuous dedication to Queen Elizabeth. Then we have a "Thesaurus Chronologiæ," dated 1628. This is one of those remarkable works which contain the whole history of the world, from the Creation to the day when the volume is sent to press, and a precise date is assigned to each. For example, we learn that the Flood occurred just 1656 years after the Creation, and began on April 25. Here are two folios of "Annotations on all the Books of the

Old and New Testament," published in 1651, the work of various Puritan divines. I confess that I have not read much of them. Nor does George Paso's Greek-Latin Lexicon (1644) promise much entertainment—though it was much used and annotated by John Webb. In the binding, however, are a few pages of a very different character, taken from a Royalist satire of the Commonwealth period. It is called "A Lecture to the People," and, to judge from these fragments, was written with considerable vigour. Can any reader supply me with its author's name? Let me give a couple of extracts:—

Archdeacon Cromwell's visitation
 Hath cleansed all (in whose pure veins doth run
 Th' reforming Bloud and vertues of his Grand
 Parent, that Man of Iron, whose rough hand
 Made many a stately Abbey lie full low)
 Who in one godly march upon his way
 (Helped by his Surrogate the good Lord Grey)
 Five Crosses kill'd, Five books of Common-Prayers,
 Five Surplices, Five Fiddles, and Five Beares.

Again, comparing the Puritan present with the Royalist past:—

But pray ye neighbours say,
 While those light Burdens on your Shoulders lay
 Had ye not merrier Dayes? The King and Law
 Called for some bricke indeed, but gave ye straw;
 The Ship-Mony was a weight; well, yeild it so;
 Since that was damn'd, does the World better grow?
 Have ye no Burthens now? O happy Men
 The twentieth part ye 'ave paid, the Fifth, and when
 Your new Task-masters shall be pleased to call
 And say ye are Delinquents, Farewell All!

With this—probably accidental—exception, all the books in the collection are works of prose.



This stout folio is William Nicholls' "Comment on the Book of Common Prayer." Tradition states that the author wrote it all without the help of an amanuensis, and thereby ruined his health. It has a fine portrait at the beginning and sixty-two pages of additional notes by Cosin, Andrewes, and others at the end; Waterland's "Vindication of Christ's Divinity," published in 1719, was the first shot in his great battle over Trinitarian doctrine. No controversialist has possessed a style more lucid. Then you may notice "The Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers," edited by Wake, then Bishop of Lincoln and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury; and a beautifully printed volume of sermons by an earlier Bishop of Lincoln, Robert Sanderson, author of the Preface to our Prayer Book. Here, again, in two great folios, are "The Theological Works of the Rev. Charles Leslie." Leslie was a tremendous fighter and a man of extraordinary industry. In modern days he would have written letters in the correspondence columns of many newspapers. Whenever a fight was taking place, whatever its cause, he must have a part in it. Whether the question at issue were Deism, or mixed marriages, or Quakerism, or political matters, the Rev. Charles Leslie whirled his flail

about him and plunged into the fray. "The Snake in the Grass ; or, Satan transform'd into an Angel of Light," is the characteristic title of his onslaught on Quakerism ; and he hits very hard indeed. For five years he wrote, single-handed, a newspaper, *The Rehearsal*, a rival of Defoe's "Review." One is not surprised to find that his mode of dealing with political questions made it necessary for the Rev. Charles to fly to France, disguised as a soldier, in order to escape arrest. A fine edition of Stillingfleet, the official report of Dr. Sacheverell's trial, Wall's "Infant Baptism," and, rather unexpectedly, "The Works of the famous Nicholas Machiavel, newly and faithfully translated into English" (1680) were other books which this old-time vicar thought that his successors would do well to read.



Most interesting is "The Modern Practice of Physick," dated 1713. Despite its title, the remedies prescribed must surely belong to an earlier age. Some, indeed, are simple enough. If you have a cold, it will suffice to anoint your head with oil of amber. If, however, you are suffering from pleurisy, your chemist must be requested to prepare the following mixture:—

"Take of the Extract of the Flowers of red Poppies two Drams ; of Mallows, the Gum that is extracted of Oak each a Dram and a half ; of the Membrane pleura of a Man or a wild Boar two

Drams ; of the filings of Boars-Teeth three Drams ; Pike Jaws one Dram and a half ; of right Unicorn, Magistery of Coral, the inner peel of Hazel-Nuts, Box flowers, Sal-Prunel each a Dram ; make a Mass. It is a Composition of wonderful effect in a Pleurisie : the Dose is from a Scruple to half a Dram.” Alas, I fear that in these degenerate days it is not every druggist who has in stock pike jaws, unicorn, and filings of boars’ teeth. For dropsy, again, you need a mixture of which the lengthy formula begins: “Take twenty skin’d Vipers,” while “our Oil of Toads” is likewise recommended for this disease. As a good, safe family medicine what think you of this ?

“Take of wash’d Aloes, Saffron, Myrrhe, each half an Ounce ; of Oriental and Occidental Balsam, each half a dram ; six Bones of Stags-hearts, Unicorn, Emeralds, Oriental Bezoar ; Pearls, and Coral prepared ; the Wood of Aloes, each ten grains : Ambergrease five Grains, of our Tincture of Metals, and Magistery of Tartar, each a sufficient quantity, to make a Mass for Pills ; of which give half a Dram, about Bed-time, twice a Week. It clears the Blood, strengthens the Head and Stomach ; it eases the Head-ach, comforts all the Spirits, renews Youth, and retards Old Age.” These, be it noted, are not the nostrums of some unlicensed quack ; on the contrary, they are gravely recommended by a Court physician. Bound up in the same volume is an essay on “The

Power and Influence of the Sun and Moon on Hamane Bodies ; and of the Diseases that rise from thence," by Richard Mead, Doctor of Physick, Fellow of the Royal Society, and Physician in ordinary to St. Thomas's Hospital in Southwark. He relates the case of " a French Matron, who was round-faced at full Moon, and was very beautiful ; but at the Wane of the Moon, her Eyes, Nose, and Face were turned on one Side ; so that she would not go abroad, because of the great Deformity, till, the Moon changing again, she by little and little came to her full Moon and former Beauty." Well, really, Dr. Mead ! No hint is added of the treatment given in this case, though one might suppose that " Our Hysterick Extract "—quite a simple remedy, composed of only twenty-three ingredients—might have been tried.



Well, if the Rev. John Webb did dose his parishioners by the help of this medical treatise, they deserve our pity. But one may hope that he found the prescriptions not easy to prepare. Anyhow, with these books of his beside me, I cannot think of him without affection. I like to picture him walking through the lanes in the dignified garb of his age ; meditating on the strife, of which echoes came from town, betwixt Whig and Tory, betwixt Trinitarian and Deist ; meditating sonorous sentences for his next sermon, and finding

leisure also to speculate concerning his successors in time to come. There is something fine in his resolve that the books which had been of service to him should be at their disposal, should be a link binding the future Vicars of each generation to the past. And, if one can afford to laugh gently at him now, who knows that two centuries hence some other incumbent may not chance upon this very volume, and shake with honest mirth as he reads my most well-meant and most serious sentence of to-day ?

At a Railway Bookstall

AN astute mind was his who first devised the railway bookstall. Pacing the platform soon becomes tiresome ; waiting-rooms are dismal holes, occupied as a rule by cross elderly women and babies with vocal powers quite disproportionate to their size. A few persons there are whom the buns and bovril of the refreshment-room attract—intrepid heroes, these, and iron-framed, whose prowess it were perilous for the most of us to emulate. Thus you behold the travellers who await their train inevitably clustered about the bookstall. Some finger one magazine after another, skimming a paragraph in the first, contemplating the pictures in a second, glancing through the advertisements in a third—and buying none. From his lair the bookstall clerk regards them—not with favour. Women quite shamelessly pilfer their reading in this way ; men do so but rarely, and then feel morally bound to spend something at last : the clerk's reproachful gaze discomfits them, whereas it leaves the women unperturbed. Men (call them less courageous or less shameless, as you will) are content with a more distant view, with a thoughtful contemplation of the rows of

books exposed for sale. . . . "Exposed for sale," one says, yet the phrase scarce can be wholly true. If you come to consider it, you will realise that quite a number of these volumes must have been ranged upon the stall with no mere mercantile intent. What sane person would dream of purchasing them as his companions on a railway journey? Here is a stout French dictionary, there the annual volume of "*The Happy Homeside*," with its thousand or more pages; beside them you note "*A Complete Guide to Practical Farriery*," "*The Compendium of British Beetles*," and the *Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. And quite often there is a Bible or two, and a Prayer Book. One is very glad to see them there, of course; yet it is impossible not to wonder if anyone ever buys such books at a railway station. Perhaps they are meant to indicate the entire respectability of the business. But have you, has any living person, ever bought a stout French dictionary (8s. 6d. net), or a Beetle-book, or Shakespeare, to read in the train? No, these volumes are placed there by the philanthropists who own the stall for pictorial and decorative effect. The French dictionary, for example, with its vivid green-and-red binding, strikes a fine note of colour, helps the bookstall to neutralise the drab dreariness of the platform. As for the watches, purses, stylograph pens, and so forth (things, again, which no one buys at a station), they are thrown in to give the scene a home-like touch, cheering the solitary

traveller by their intimate suggestion of domestic life. And so, his heart gladdened by the memories at which these hint, his eye charmed by the hilarious binding of the French dictionary, cheerfully he pulls out his pence and buys a couple of newspapers.



Yet there is another department, so to speak, of the bookstall, less pleasing to the casual eye, which wins my suffrage before the rest. It is full of what are known technically as "remainders." Often it is a mere annexe to the bookstall proper. The dictionary, the Beetle-book, rows of new romances, even the magazines, are housed beneath a protective roof. Some few boards on trestles, exposed to the dust and grime, are deemed sufficient for these derelicts of literature. Here is no feast of colour for the eye. Once brave in their blue or green or scarlet, age and exposure have changed the binding of all to drab. For these books—or, at least, these copies of them—are failures. Once they stood proudly among the newest works, but never a purchaser desired them. From between their leaves blue-pencilled cards shout a desperate appeal: "Only 10*d.*! Published at 6*s.*"—yet it goes unheeded. . . . I declare I was just about to write a paragraph about their hapless case so pathetic that it would have moved you to tears. But, on turning over some of the books, I incline to think that, after all, they have been not quite neglected. Some, at least, appear

to have been issued at one time from the circulating library before being cashiered and placed in this melancholy row. This page has been turned down—an odious trick—to mark the place where a reader made pause. Here is a brown stain, as of tea. . . . Yes, it was long after the time, and she thought him faithless. So she strove to put him out of her thoughts, and sipped her tea, and tried to forget the grey real world in this romance. And then the door opened, and he came in ! She sprang to her feet, upsetting her tea-cup in her haste. . . . Such may (or may not) be the history of this stain. Anyhow, we may feel sure that the book has been opened.



Yet there are others which never can have been part of a circulating library—books other than novels, with uncut pages ; books that for years have been offered for sale in vain. Upon such it is my frequent custom to take compassion ; from motives of pity, if you like so to believe—or, more frankly, because they are so cheap. Besides, many of them are such as one is not apt to find elsewhere than among the waifs and strays of a railway bookstall. Let me exhibit two recent purchases for your delight. I do so with something of the pride which your opulent collector confesses as he shows you his first editions, his illuminated manuscripts. Like him, I must tell you how they came into my

possession. I had to go somewhere to talk—to make a speech, or give an address, or something of the kind. Waiting for my train, I glanced at the “reduced” volumes on the bookstall, and there, pat to my need, stood two works which could be, and were, acquired at a total cost of one shilling. On the binding of one was printed “Speaking made Easy. Speeches and Toasts : How to Make and Propose Them. Speeches Ready-made for Every Occasion.” The other had a more succinct but a not more modest title : “The Complete Orator : a Guide to Success in the Pulpit, in Politics, and on the Platform.” With such works to study on the journey, one felt that one’s speech that afternoon should be something quite out of the common. “The Complete Orator” was published in 1884 ; “Speeches and Toasts” is undated, but from internal evidence, as the critics say, we may feel safe in assigning it to the same period. “Speeches and Toasts,” professing to supply “speeches ready-made for every occasion,” scarcely fulfils this capacious pledge. If you have to “say a few words” at the opening of a flower show or bazaar, if you have to assist in laying a foundation-stone or in presenting a testimonial, no ready-made speeches for these occasions are to be found in the volume. It does provide, however, a large number of orations for weddings, birthdays, regatta dinners, archery meetings, and angling clubs. And all these speeches have one

admirable quality—they are short. Perhaps this is a concession to the orator who attempts to learn them by heart and to reproduce them as his own—which, apparently, is the author's idea. Thus, supposing you know that you will have to reply to the toast of "The Army" at some public dinner, you memorise the ready-made speech—which begins, if you please, like this: "Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—I assure you that, until I heard my name pronounced just now by our worthy chairman, I was quite unaware that I should be called upon to address you!"



Again, it seems to me that if you fired off these ready-made speeches as the author suggests, you might find yourself in trouble. At a regatta dinner, for example, you are told to remark: "The finances are in a pretty good condition. The treasurer can inform you that we have £— in hand after all expenses are provided for. But I regret to see that many members are in arrear. The committee do not wish to enforce the rules with unnecessary strictness, but we will at once call upon those members who have not paid their subscriptions to do so, and in any defaulting cases we will proceed as by our by-laws, permitted, and framed for such a contingency." Indignation seems to have marred the construction of the last sentence. But suppose you learn all this by

heart and reel it off at the first regatta dinner you attend, and it chances that all the members, to a man, have paid their subscriptions? One fears that you will not be invited again. The other book—"The Complete Orator"—is a safer guide in this respect, being quite judiciously vague. Here is the opening of the speech it suggests for "a rural reunion"—whatever a rural reunion may be: "Ladies and Gentlemen,—I congratulate (or condole with) you upon the propitious (or adverse) climatic conditions under which we are assembled this afternoon (or evening). You will agree with me that our heartfelt thanks are due to —— for his (her or their) kindness in —— . Incompetent as I am to pay a worthy tribute to his (see above) liberality, I must be content to mention —— . Nor must we forget —— , whose —— kindness of —— years has been renewed for the —— time." The unfortunate suggestion of strong language which these blanks convey is, of course, quite accidental; but it becomes painfully marked when, in proposing the chairman's health, you are bidden to say "he is, by common consent, the most perfect specimen of a —— that our neighbourhood has known." Another speech begins: "Sir,—Having been a lifelong Conservative or Liberal, according to circumstances"—from which the printers seem to have omitted the necessary brackets. One can imagine some unhappy man solemnly repeating the sentence as it

stands. . . . Perhaps, however, it could be applied to a vast number of voters without much violence to truth.



In addition to the set speeches, both volumes contain a number of "sentiments" wherewith the grateful orator can brighten his remarks. Here are a few of them: "May the flowers of prosperity spring from the seedlings of integrity." "May opinions never float in a sea of ignorance." "May the lamp of friendship be lighted by the oil of sincerity." "May we never want a bait when we fish for conduct." The last of these is something of an enigma. How, and why, and where do we "fish for conduct"? In old days, I believe, strangers at a public dinner were called upon by the chairman for a "speech, song, or sentiment." I think that anyone could produce such sentiments as these at the rate of one a minute. Neither of the books seems to give real help towards feats of a much greater difficulty. "In proposing a vote of thanks," says "The Complete Orator," "a few words will generally suffice. They should, however, be well-chosen, graceful, and epigrammatic." Quite so; but how are these qualities to be achieved? "The Complete Orator" is silent, is dolefully incomplete upon the point. In the rival volume there is a speech before the distribution of prizes at athletic sports. Anyone could make such a speech. Then follows a foot-note: "In giving the

prizes a few words of congratulation should be addressed to each winner." Ah, but there's the rub! To find fresh and appropriate words for each successive winner when there are two or three dozen of them—many of us would be grateful indeed to the book which would help us in that. After all, however, my two trophies from the bookstall cost but a single shilling, and I don't know when I've had more fun for the money.



The truth is, I believe, that anyone can learn, not to be a "Complete Orator," but to talk in public well enough for most purposes. Yet the art is not to be acquired from little books. It seems to be oddly rare in these days. Even in Parliament members have recourse to fat manuscripts. They have written out their speeches and tried to learn them by heart, which is for most people the worst possible method. Some people use notes; others of us find them more of a hindrance than a help. This, perhaps, is a method which suits as well as any those of us who are just average people: "Think out clearly the three or four points you wish to make. Jot them down in a few words apiece. Try to find a connection which will lead you naturally from point one to point two. Write down in full, if you like, one short sentence with which to begin your speech, and another with which to end it. Just before

you set forth to the meeting, run over your three or four points again, refer once more, if necessary, to your scrap of paper, and then put it in the fire.” On some days the sentences will shape themselves more readily than on others, your vocabulary will seem more copious, the delight of your task will be enhanced enormously. Physical conditions have something to do with this : a room of a low temperature is more difficult to speak in than a warm one—which, I suspect, is partly why many preachers find the evening sermon easier than that of the morning. Likewise, it is incomparably less difficult to address five hundred or a thousand people than fifty. Sometimes, again, you feel that you are in touch with your audience—and I don’t think there is a more delightful sensation—at others you have to fight hard to get into touch, but succeed before you have done ; at yet other times you fail altogether. That causes a feeling of despair. Yet you can console yourself with the reflection that such a sense of failure is worth having. The people who cannot really succeed, either in pulpit or on platform, are they to whom all such feelings are unknown : who say their pieces or read their cultured essays with no real consciousness of the pulsing humanity before them. They may interest their hearers in some degree—they may entertain, they may even instruct—but they will never persuade. And to persuade is, after all, the chief end of pulpit and platform alike.

Patch and Powder Books

MOST of us, I think, are sensible of the charm—a charm in which humour and pathos are subtly blended—possessed by a collection of old books. We may be no bibliophiles, in the narrower sense. The difference between a first edition and a second, published but twelve months later, may seem to us as small as it is great to the connoisseur of the sale-room ; we admire but ignorantly the printing of the Elzevirs or Baskerville ; that a volume with its edges untrimmed should command a price five times greater than that of another with its pages “cut,” may be held by us no more than a freakish whim of the collectors. Yet, if our technical knowledge be small, the books of bygone centuries make their silent appeal to us, and not in vain. They bring us, as perhaps nothing else does to quite the same degree, into personal touch with past generations, with the men and women who have been asleep so long in the quiet churchyard. You take down some dusty tome from its shelf. On the title-page, though the ink be brown, you read the name of its first owner. You wonder where and how he bought it, what was his judgment of its worth. At least he read it through

with care ; here and there is a phrase underlined, a marginal note made, a printer's error emended. And the bare fact that the book now in your hand once rested in his, that his eye followed the lines of print that now you read, gives you a sense of kinship with him, making a bridge across the chasm of time.

Surely, of all periods, the eighteenth century was the age of solid reading. A book in those days was a book, not a mere bundle of flimsy pages in a perishable binding. Now we are apt to be satisfied with paper-bound reprints, or works but insecurely robed in gaudy cloth. Drop the thing to the floor, and the chances are that loosened leaves and damaged covers will mark your carelessness. Even the printing, so the scientists assure us, is done in an ink which will fade when a generation or two have passed. Not thus did the Tonsons and Lintots of the eighteenth century fashion their wares. Calf, solid calf, was the binding they loved ; not alone the learned treatise, but your cookery-book, your "Verses on Several Occasions," your "Satirical Disquisition on the Follies of the Age," were clad in this sober and enduring dress. The paper was thick, the type clear, the lines marched in stately progress across the page. What a fascination, by the way, there is in the long "s" ! The "Spectator," for example (not the staid journal of to-day, but the "Spectator" of Steele,

Addison, and Tickell), always seems to have lost half its delight when reprinted with the modern "s." Read it in an old edition; then regard it in one of those detestable school-books of to-day; new type, shiny paper, the lines numbered in the margin (so that you may refer the more easily to certain preposterous editorial notes at the end), and behold! Sir Roger, Will Honeycomb, and the "silent, short gentleman" himself seem alien, awkward, ill-at-ease in such a setting.



These eighteenth century books, then, were solid in a material sense. They exist in thousands to-day. With I know not how many families a group of them survives, in as good a condition as when they were published. Nothing but a fire will destroy them—and even a fire, as I can testify from personal observation, may but bend and discolour them when, at a like degree of heat, your modern book would blaze up as a piece of gun-cotton. They endure still; you find them with their air of patient strength, beside the modern novels in many a family bookcase—somebody's "Sermons," a stray volume of the "Tatler" or "Rambler," the "Letters of Mr. Pope," and the like. Sometimes one meets a larger assembly of them; within the last few days I have turned over a thousand or more in a friend's library. And not in the material sense alone are they solid. The people of the eighteenth century had

robust literary digestions. Moreover—a fact contrasting sharply with a prevalent belief concerning that time—they had a tremendous appetite for theology. Their lightest fare, beyond periodicals, plays, and occasional satires or lampoons, were “Elegant Extracts, Designed for the Diversion and Instruction of Young Persons.” Even these, one fears, would not appeal to the readers of “Tit-Bits.” But they read the sermons of Offspring Blackall, D.D. (what a name !), in seven volumes, and countless other pulpit discourses ; “Musgrave on the Psalms” ; Fleetwood’s “Relative Duties” ; treatises on “Death” and “Judgment” by Sherlock ; Frizell (in many volumes) “On the Liturgy” ; somebody’s “Portrait of Methodism”—not at all a flattering portrait ; Warwood’s “The Purposes of God Comprehensively Explained”—Mr. Warwood did not lack assurance !—and so on. They did not merely possess these works ; they read them. Some of the most ponderous are annotated throughout in pencil. In any chance gathering of eighteenth century books, the odds are that a third of them will prove to be religious.



And the supreme virtues of religion, one must add, seemed to be that it taught “the lower orders” to know their place and to be “contented”—thereby averting risk of a social upheaval—while it aided their masters to reach that *summum bonum*, “gentility.” To be genteel

—that was the aim of the rich ; to grovel before their “betters”—that was the whole duty of the poor. Of the vogue of gentility I found some quaint examples among this eighteenth century literature. *Imprimis*, a “Letter to a Young Lady of Quality before Confirmation,” written, I think, by a domestic chaplain. “Madam,” it began, “obedient to that Sense of Duty which in you, as in your Honoured Parents, is ever the prevailing Motive of your Life, you are about to renew those Sacred Vows registered on your behalf by the Pious Sponsors of your Infancy. Grateful indeed they must be at the Rich Promise of your early Years already so largely Fulfilled. They have noted with continuous Approbation your Modest Carriage, your Abundant Kindness of Heart, your Genteel Converse, so far in advance of many of your Age. How welcome to the Heavenly Author of your being will seem the calm and reasoned utterance of your Lips, whereby in your own Person you will pledge yourself anew to His Service !” . . . That is page 1, and there are fifty-three other pages in the same style. If they did not persuade the Genteel Young Lady that she was conferring a distinct favour on Almighty God by becoming a candidate for Confirmation, it was not the fault of the domestic chaplain. I found also a hymnal compiled by a Birmingham incumbent for the use of his people ; it was published early in the nineteenth century,

but its spirit was that of the eighteenth. Its preface explained at some length how ungenteel was the average hymn, how unsuitable was its impassioned language "to express the sober and reasoned devotions of a reflective assembly." To meet the difficulty, this incumbent had been kind enough to re-write many of the best-known hymns ; you shall have a specimen of his methods :

Hark, melodious angels sing
Anthems to their Heavenly King,
Peace on earth, the new-born Child
God and man hath reconciled ;
Let the joyful nations raise
In due turn their seemly praise,
While the angels answer them :
" Christ is born in Bethlehem."

This is the first stanza of "Hark, the herald angels," adapted to the taste of genteel Churchmen in Birmingham, *circa* 1800.



The author could quote many precedents for drastic revision of this type. In the earlier part of the eighteenth century Shakespeare was reckoned but an inferior bard ; his plays seemed long, and not at all genteel, being, indeed, full of rugged lines and naked passion. The public thought Mr. Addison's "Cato" a vastly finer play than Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar." Yet one eminent writer felt that "Julius Cæsar" could be made tolerable enough, if revised with an unsparing hand. This was his Grace, John

Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, concerning whom Pope wrote :—

Muse, 'tis enough ; at length the labour ends,
And thou shalt live, for Buckingham commends.
This more than pays whole years of thankless pain ;
Time, health, and fortune are not lost in vain.
Sheffield approves, consenting Phœbus bends,
And I and malice from this hour are friends.



This critic, then, boldly resolved to improve “Julius Cæsar,” and I found the result the other day among his poetical works, published in 1722. “Julius Cæsar Altered,” he called it, and altered it was indeed. As a start he struck out Acts IV and V of Shakespeare’s tragedy, bringing the play to an end with the scene in the Forum, after Cæsar’s death. Next he provided a chorus of Roman citizens to comment, after the manner of the Greek tragedies, upon the events enacted. When Cæsar falls by the hand of Brutus, these gentlemen moralise in this fashion :—

Could chance or senseless atoms join
To form a soul so great as his ?
Or would the powers we hold divine
Destroy their own chief masterpiece ?
Where so much difficulty lies
The doubtful are the only wise !

And what must more perplex our thoughts,
Great Jove the best of Romans sends
To do the very worst of faults
And kill the kindest of his friends !
All this is far above our reach,
Whatever priests presume to teach.



Shakespeare, one may observe with truth, could never have written that. Moreover, the Duke takes his dialogue in hand, and proceeds to make it "elegant." You will recall the famous second scene of Act III. Shakespeare made Brutus address the crowd in prose. The Duke thinks that this is quite ungenteel, and transforms the speech accordingly. In his version it begins :—

Friends, dearest countrymen, and worthy Romans,
You lovers of your laws and liberties,
Hear me throughout with patience, not with passion.
For though your kindness is my chief contentment,
I would not owe your judgment of the deed
To anything but Reason well-informed.

Whereupon the crowd shouts in ecstasy : " We will be free, and serve the noble Brutus ! " To which Brutus rejoins :—

Why, friends, ye speak impossibilities !
Would ye be free, yet serve ? How odd that sounds !

It does indeed. One would like to have heard Master Will Shakespeare's remarks upon the lines and the "improvements" generally of his play. You know by heart, I expect, Mark Antony's speech, beginning :—

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.
I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them ;
The good is oft interred with their bones ;
So let it be with Cæsar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Cæsar was ambitious ;
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously has Cæsar answered it.

You might have supposed that even John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, would have shrunk from the sacrilege of tampering with those matchless lines. But no ; “ Julius Cæsar ” had to be made “ elegant,” and John Sheffield meant to do the job thoroughly. So he supplied a new version, as follows :—

Friends, countrymen and Romans, hear me gently.
 I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.
 Lo, here the fatal end of all his glory !
 The evil that men do lives after them ;
 The good is often buried in their graves ;
 So let it be with Cæsar. Noble Brutus
 Has told you Cæsar was ambitious ;
 If he were so, then he was much to blame,
 And he has dearly paid for the offence !

Well, criticism is simply paralysed. Let it suffice to say that, at the termination of this scene, the ineffable chorus remarks :—

Ambition when unbounded brings a curse,
 But an Assassinate deserves a worse.

Whereon the curtain falls and the play ends.



Yet—save when it sets itself to improve Shakespeare—I confess to loving the eighteenth century and its books. They are as artificial, as unreal, as you please ; yet they have a charm quite apart from their literary worth. I love them all : the masterpieces of Addison and the works of infinitely lesser men ; the high-flown dedication, extending over two or three pages, at the end of

which the author subscribes himself his dedicatee's "obliged, grateful, obedient, humble servant," the stilted prose, with its elaborated antitheses, and the mellow, solid calf of the binding. Here is a school-book, bound no less finely than the rest, an edition of Martial, dedicated to the *nobilissimi juvenes* of Westminster. And behold, in manuscript on the fly-leaf, is a schoolboy scribble or two, a drawing of a knight in armour, some doggerel Latin lines beginning, *Hic est meus, et ille reus* . . . the same lines that we scribbled in the nineteenth century, and, I feel sure, that other schoolboys have written down this very term. And, with these old books before us, there comes a vision of a leisurely, tranquil age—an age when Sir Roger de Coverley went to church with his tenants; the air seems full of sunshine, and the murmur of bees as they hover over the trim garden, wherein the gentlemen in wigs and the ladies with vast hoops sit about "a dish of tea," as they discuss the merits of Mr. Pope's and Mr. Tickell's rival versions of Homer . . . an age, in short, of much ignorant taste and artificial to excess, yet of certain quiet, homely, and sturdy virtues, and a gracious air of leisured ease which we may deride if we will—but in the derision is there no trace of envy?

The Essential in Literature

Habent sua fata libelli, as a Roman poet observed ; minor works have their destinies—and tragic enough most of them must be. Not without misgiving can the thoughtful reader observe the bloated publishers' lists—to shun offence, it were well perhaps to recast that phrase—the publishers' bloated lists, which swell, at this season of the year, our newspapers and reviews. Doubtless they are welcome to the advertisement manager. They may impress, in a sense, the average person. "Well," he reflects, "authorship can't be so poor a game as these literary folk pretend. In spite of wars, strikes, bad times, and all the rest of it, they seem to be flourishing. The list of new books appears to be longer than ever." Perhaps, too, if he be very guileless, he listens credulously to the fanfares of enthusiastic publishers. In old days they were content to "wait and see" what the reviewers would say. Supposing London journals received their bantlings with a contemptuous word or two, or, worse still, with frigid silence, the chances were that some local paper would be properly enthusiastic. The "Plopton Advertiser," let us

say (and I do trust that is not the veritable name of an actual journal) would assert that Mr. Bunkum's new romance "held its reader enthralled from start to finish," and even (supposing the author to reside in Plopton) that it "ranked, not unworthily, with the masterpieces of Thackeray." Failing all else, a favourable opinion could be manufactured from almost any review, by the help of a convenient row of dots. Suppose, for instance, that the "Thunderer" had the bad taste to remark of your novel: "This work, we do not hesitate to say, shows a readiness on the part of a quite incompetent writer to grapple with problems which might dismay the greatest genius"—why, then, you summarised the verdict in this fashion: "The 'Thunderer' says: 'This work, we do not hesitate to say, shows . . . the greatest genius.'" Nowadays, however, no publisher would dream of stooping to such an artifice.



Instead, he does his own anticipatory reviewing. He has pleasure in calling your attention to a most remarkable book by a new writer—a book which cannot fail to arrest the attention of the whole thinking world. Again, while thousands of entranced readers fairly revelled in the first two novels by Mr. Snookson—"Courageous Constance" and "Petulant Patty"—they will acknowledge that he has surpassed himself in "Jovial Jemima,"

ready at all the libraries next week. Once more, he admits that the world has waited long for the appearance of a new really great poet. Dare he affirm that this rare bird has been found at last? Yes, he does. Speaking calmly and dispassionately, with the experience of many years' literary labours behind him, he believes that at last the great poet has been found. His name—he trembles with pride, thinking how familiar it will be throughout the world in a few months' time—his yet unhonoured name is Hezekiah Jones, whose “Sobs and Throbs” will be published on Tuesday next. Cloth, 3s. 6d.; white buckram, 5s. net. Thus, and much more, the publisher, speaking through his advertisements. I dare say that he is entirely honest. It is, in a sense, to his credit, if he believes his geese to be swans of the whitest. To the authors themselves hope, no doubt, has told many flattering tales. But the sympathetic onlooker, who happens to know the real state of the literary market, can scarce study the long list of publishers' “announcements” without sorrowful emotion. Here and there a book may draw a prize, but how few the prizes are, how many the blanks! As for the remarkable book by the new writer, the sales will probably amount to a couple of hundred copies. Mr. Snookson will fare better. His name is known to the public, and a story which it has only taken him nine months' strenuous work to complete may possibly bring him in so magnificent

a sum as £200. As for "Sobs and Throbs," there is reason to suspect that Mr. Jones paid £20 or so "towards cost of production." In return for this, he may receive about a year hence a statement of sales, and a cheque for £1 17s. 6d. In fact, as you glance down the list of "forthcoming publications" you may believe, if you choose, all that the publishers say in their praise. But the sober fact remains that twelve months hence, of these "stirring romances," "stories that are bound to arrest wide attention," "brilliant pieces of biography," and "poems that have the authentic note of genius," quite 90 per cent will be as dead as mutton.



And why? That question is not as simple to answer as you may suppose. You may say, "Because the books have no real merit, and deserve the oblivion which is their speedy fate." That seems an obvious explanation, but, in point of fact, it is not true. I grant that a certain proportion of the novels, essays, and poems are almost hopeless rubbish, are the work of people who, lacking all literary skill, would be far better employed in any occupation other than that of writing. Yet that proportion does not amount to more than 50 per cent of the whole number; probably it is a good deal less. We will put the figure at this amount, however, for the sake of

argument. Then we will suppose that 10 per cent of this autumn's publications—and here you have a liberal estimate—achieve what may be called “success.” That leaves 40 per cent to be accounted for. These 40 per cent fail; fail, for the most part, with a disastrous completeness. Why do they fail? They are not, technically speaking, bad. On the contrary, they have distinct merits. Some of the novels show a skill in construction and dialogue which certain of the great masters of fiction might have envied. The verse is melodious and admirably fashioned; the mastery of technique which it denotes would have made the writer instantly famous had his work appeared forty or fifty years ago. Now it falls quite flat, and perhaps the sale does not amount to more than a few dozen copies—bought by the author's friends. How, then, are we to account for the failure of this 40 per cent? To assert that they are without literary merit is to assert what is not the case.



I seem to hear a chorus of replies. “Because the taste of the public has degenerated,” say the authors, who add some caustic remarks about half-penny newspapers and cheap magazines. Within limits, the accusation is true, yet it is not an adequate explanation. Given its choice between passably good literature and trash, the general public, I admit, is apt to prefer trash. Yet it would welcome

really good books, if it had the chance. "Because too many books are published," says someone else, "and the good books are swamped by the bad." This, again, is but partially true; the book of real genius will emerge triumphantly from the stream. "Because skill in technique is now so common that it fails to attract attention." Yes, there I agree. Technique alone is able no longer to make a book successful; yet many of the failures have other merits than that of technical skill. All of these answers have elements of truth in them, but neither separately nor collectively do they solve the problem. Here are scores of volumes, quite admirably written. We are more clever than our ancestors, we have analysed much more thoroughly the secrets of good craftsmanship; we are excellent critics, and know exactly how great books should be written. Yet we fail to produce great books. When we read the latest "masterpiece" which a sanguine publisher has thrust upon us, we recognise that, in one sense, his epithets were not ill-deserved. The thing certainly *is* brilliant, yet it leaves us quite unmoved. "Oh, quite a readable story," we say, when friends ask for our judgment. But—and this, perhaps, is the crucial test—certainly we do not mean to read it over and over again, as we do the great books. Why, however, should this be so—why do our modern works, despite infinite pains and great technical knowledge, fall below the highest level—nay, fall below

the level of books written in past days, the defects of which are patent to everyone now, yet which claim our enduring love ? In a word, what is wrong with our modern literature ?



Its real defects, I believe, are two : it lacks enthusiasm, and it lacks sincerity. Without these you can produce pretty little works of art, but you cannot write the truly great book, which disarms the critic and captures the great heart of the public. A most obvious contrast to our own age in the first of these qualities was that of Elizabeth. Hers was a time of enthusiasm, of enterprise and bold venture, unhindered by nice calculations of cost or by self-consciousness. Sailors and songsters alike "let themselves go" ; the former literally, to fare in frail ships across untraversed seas, the latter metaphorically, resolute to discover a new world of literature. Both alike obeyed unquestioning the call of romance. Even their failures—Greenvill's defeat, Spenser's half-finished "*Faery Queene*"—were splendid. Raleigh typified the spirit of enthusiasm perfectly, whether setting himself in prison to write the *History of the World*, or sailing under the guns of Cadiz with a blare of trumpets, or walking unafraid to the scaffold. How superb, too, is the enthusiasm of Shakespeare ! For precision of finish he cared little ; it is said that he altered scarcely a line ; his speed in writing must

have been tremendous. Nor did he trouble himself with the classical rules of the drama, or hesitate because of the bigness of the subjects he attempted ; at his work he went, intent upon his goal, resolute to make fresh discoveries, seeking no guide, and delighting to travel country where none had been before. And his enthusiasm triumphed superbly ; its glow makes his faults but as spots in the sun. Almost any school-child, and certainly every modern verse-writer, could detect and emend the faults in Shakespeare's metre and prosody ; but what do they matter ? Let us pass to later days. Read the last few stanzas of the " Adonais," and again you will understand how enthusiasm makes poetry immortal. Or take the case of Dickens. There you have a writer whose technique is often quite deplorable. No modern writer of stories whose English was so faulty, whose power of construction was so weak, could hope for any kind of success. Yet, despite superior critics, Dickens's tales live, and will live. And their vitality is due, above all else, to their writer's enthusiasm. That is the true spirit of the man who is to compel the multitude to read him, the spirit which carries all before it, and makes his career a triumphal procession. Once more, consider the success of (do not be startled) Miss Corelli. I do not propose to rank her with Shakespeare, Shelley, and Dickens, and I grant that her books abound with almost every fault. Yet why has she succeeded in captur-

ing the public? Plenty of other writers have written in as bad taste, have dished up scraps of philosophy and psychology with an air of profound erudition—have imitated, in fact, what seem to be her chief characteristics, and yet have not attained a thousandth part of her success. The truth is that, with all her faults, Miss Corelli has this gift of enthusiasm. She believes deeply in herself and her mission. She is convinced that she has a message for the world. And the public, which sways to enthusiasm as a compass-needle follows a magnet, has given her a triumph which the most elegant stylist, the most painstaking craftsman, can never attain.



Closely akin, I think, to the quality of enthusiasm is that of sincerity, and a want of sincerity explains the failure of thousands of modern books. This does not mean that the writers are consciously dishonest, but merely that they set down borrowed thoughts, often in borrowed and trite phrases. Take up a volume of lyrics published this year. Here is a little poem about an autumn evening. The writer tells you, in melodious and impeccable stanzas, how its influence makes him feel sad, how he hears the wind sighing in the boughs, and the water moving among the reeds; so, he meditates, is life like summer transient—well, you can imagine the rest. In its way, the thing is excel-

lently done. There is not a harsh line in the poem. Set it beside a lyric of Wordsworth's, or Tennyson's *Autumn Song* ("A spirit haunts the year's last hours"), and you might fairly be puzzled to say which, technically, was the better poem. Yet the fact remains that the one touches you indescribably, almost bringing tears to your eye, while the modern poem leaves you unmoved; "a pretty little thing," you say dispassionately about it. Now the real cause of the difference—and the way in which it is transmitted so unerringly through the prosaic medium of ink and paper seems miraculous—is just this: Wordsworth or Tennyson was sincere. He set down as directly as he knew how things that he himself had seen, feelings which he himself had felt. The later bard merely said, "Let me write a poem about autumn." Possibly he did see the landscape he describes. But the thoughts it conjured up were not thoughts, in any deep sense, his own, although he may have fancied them to be so. Really they were thoughts assimilated in the course of reading; imperfect recollections of what other people had said they felt. Therefore his poem is insincere; therefore, despite all its technical skill, it leaves us cold. . . . I have not space in which to illustrate this truth at greater length, but I may just hint how closely it affects preaching. The sermon which is insincere in this sense may be delivered in all honest intention, may be admirably phrased, and even

gain some critical admiration. But it fails of its ultimate purpose, just because the thoughts and the arguments and the turns of speech are not really born of the preacher himself. It is the preacher or speaker who contrives (perhaps in words that stumble) to set before others what is part of his very self—the things he has seen, the thoughts he has felt, the experience he has lived—that will move multitudes.

Biographies

To choose another man's holiday reading for him is a business almost as risky as that of recommending a holiday place—and that, as everyone knows, is a most hazardous enterprise, like to dissolve the staunchest of friendships. You have discovered a beautiful and sequestered spot, unspoilt by tourists. With noble altruism, you advise an inquirer to try it this year. Thither he goes, with his family. All of them are bored to death, and the burden of daily lamentation round the breakfast-table is, “Ah, it was that wretch X who let us in for *this* !” In the same way, it is unwise to prescribe literature for others. Writing of holiday books, one can give personal views, and even venture reasons for the choice, but it would be foolish to bid others line their portmanteaux with the volumes which happen to please oneself. For myself, then, I think biography is the best form of holiday reading. Publishers do not seem to share this belief; their lists of “books for the holidays” are made up, with scarcely an exception, of novels. To this dogma of theirs I will not subscribe, for more reasons than one. The holiday novel should be brief, bright, and amusing—

qualities hard to find in modern fiction. Our novelists, in fact, have other aims: they are ambitious of writing "powerful" books, which has come to be but another name for disagreeable, while they, or their publishers, imagine that the reader wishes each powerful book to run to some four hundred pages. The old three-volume novel was not so long as are many of its one-volume successors. Moreover, before all else the holiday book must be (to borrow an epithet from Stevenson) "dippable." You must be able to take it up at any moment with pleasure and to put it down at any moment without pain. Now, if a story which you have not read before be really good, a holiday is not the right season for reading it. You are loth to close it when the evening rise has begun, or when it is time to start for the links or a sail. "It grips you from the first page to the last," as the advertisements say; and on your holiday you do not want to be gripped. If, on the other hand, it bores you, it is equally to be shunned. No; if we are to read novels on a holiday, let them be old friends. They cause no cerebral excitement, for we know the plots beforehand. "*Vanity Fair*" is an excellent holiday novel, and so is "*Pennennis*"; you can open them anywhere and read a few pages at any time with a gentle pleasure, while you do not resent the interruption which makes you lay them down.



But biographies are better still, being the most "dippable" of all books. The literary quality, too, matters far less than in other forms of composition. Provided that the subject be an interesting person, even a badly written life of him cannot easily be dull. At worst there are the man's own letters, and the biographer's sententious comments can be skipped. There are biographies, no doubt, which are too ponderous for words; they have been planned on too vast a scale, and are unrelieved by humour. I fear that Lord Morley's "Life of Gladstone" falls within this category, as, to my mind at least, does Liddon's biography of Pusey. The Gladstone biography suffers also from the fact that its writer is confessedly out of sympathy with the religious side of his subject's life, which was no minor detail in this case. But the attitude of the biographer to the biographed is a question of some delicacy. He should be an admirer, I think—a touch of hero-worship is not amiss—yet he has to beware of fatuous adulation. When in the memoir of an American bishop, albeit a splendid preacher and a delightful personality, one finds that the author can express his praise only by using phrases from the New Testament originally applied to Our Lord, one is simply nauseated. On the other hand, the impression given by a Life so critical as to be hostile is not quite pleasant. Mr. Purcell's "Life of Manning" was an example of this variety, and some readers will recall the

astounding obituary notice of R. L. Stevenson which the late Mr. W. E. Henley thought it became him to pen. Even had the aspersions been true, they should not have been cast publicly by the man who had been trusted as an intimate friend. It were easier to pardon praise carried to an extreme, however absurd. When a book annoys us in this direction, usually it is because the author has not been content to praise his subject's strong points, but goes out of his way to deny that he had any weak ones ; or, again, lauds him as warmly for what he was not as for what he was. Not long since I looked at a memoir of Mark Twain. To describe him as a fascinating humorist would be—despite such lapses into bad taste as his “ Yankee at the Court of King Arthur ”—to give him no more than his due. But when we are bidden to recognise in Mark Twain a leader of thought, a profound sociologist, philosopher, and moralist, we begin to demur. That a biographer should assert his goose to be a swan is right and proper. But he goes too far when he insists that the creature is nothing short of a bird of paradise.



Who, then, should be the biographer ? He must have close sympathy with his subject, and yet be able to view him judicially, or at least with a certain impersonal attachment. This may seem equivalent to barring out a near relative, and cer-

tainly some of the worst biographies ever penned have been the work of widows and children. Yet there are exceptions. What could be more admirable than Mrs. Creighton's memoir of her distinguished husband? Anyhow, the writer should not make the common blunder of wearying the reader at the outset by giving pages of remote family history, enough to dismay the keenest student of atavism. If X was a great man, I am glad to read the history of his career. But I do not want a long account of X's schooldays, which were much like those of men not so great. Far less do I want pages and pages about his parents, his grandparents, and his remote ancestors. Again, the editor must have access to his subject's correspondence, but must know how to use it with discrimination. Some of it may have to be suppressed because its publication would give offence. A famous holocaust of Byron's letters was made in Mr. Murray's office, doubtless a prudent act. Other letters, again, may seem too frivolous for print. If Bishop Stubbs' epistles had been given to us unedited, what a wicked delight the volume would have been! Sometimes, however, a biographer makes the mistake of overloading his book with the most trivial notes, the reproduction of which in print is an absurdity. By way of example, let me quote one from the massive volumes, published a few years ago, of the Brontës' correspondence :—

“DEAR MADAM,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of the parcel which arrived the other day from Huddersfield, and to thank yourself for the frock and muslin and Miss Outhwaite for the shawl which she has so kindly sent me. My chilblains are quite well. I was sorry I was out when Mr. Atkinson called the other day. Pray give my love to Mrs. Firth, and present my thanks to her for her welcome note. The Miss Woolers desire their kindest respects to you; they are much obliged to Mr. Franks for the loan of ‘Keith on the Prophecies,’ with which they were greatly pleased. Accept, dear madam, my sincere thanks for all the kindness you have shown me, and permit me to subscribe myself,—Yours gratefully and affectionately, C. BRONTË.”

Does the most fervent admirer of “Jane Eyre” find this type of letter interesting, or would Mrs. Gaskell’s excellent “Life of Charlotte Brontë” have been bettered by the inclusion of it? We want to know about her creations and her character, not her chilblains.



Suppose you are asked to name the six best biographies in the English language, what will be your answer? As to the first place, I think there can be little difference of opinion. It must be given to Boswell’s “Life of Johnson.” There, in an extreme degree, you have the two elements necessary for success in this form of literature—an

extraordinarily strong and interesting personality as the subject of the memoir, and a man with an unmatched gift for vivid portraiture as its author. Boswell has the art which conceals artifice. He gives you the impression that he is merely an amiable and garrulous donkey, humorously vain, and unconscious of his own absurdity. Only by degrees does the enormous skill of the book dawn upon you, do you realise the skill of selection shown, the art by which Boswell deliberately uses himself as a foil in order to display the character of Johnson. The facility with which he deceives the average reader, making him suppose the biographer to be but a simple-minded, egotistic chronicler of events—this is the final triumph of craftsmanship. Johnson was born more than two centuries ago; who else of his age lives as he does? Whom do we know so well, whom should we recognise so swiftly, as the sage whom Miss Pinkerton called “the great lexicographer”? And the credit of this belongs solely to James Boswell. His work is not merely the best biography in our language, but incomparably the best. Between it and the next best is a great gulf. What work shall we put in the second place? I am disposed to vote for Trevelyan’s “Life of Macaulay.” No one can emulate Boswell’s methods with success, but the “Life of Macaulay” is a pattern for every modern biographer. Everything essential is there—a full record of the life, ample selections from the cor-

respondence and speeches; the man's private life, his career as a politician, as a Civil servant—or, to speak more accurately, a servant of the East India Company—his work as an historian, are all set vividly before us; but a sense of proportion is observed throughout, the chapters are not overloaded with detail (there are no chilblain letters!), and the result is a single volume of comfortable size, convenient for the holiday-maker in his hammock or deck-chair. It is time to break away from the convention of making a biography fill two ponderous volumes.



Boswell's "Johnson," Trevelyan's "Macaulay"—we have, then, four places yet vacant. One certainly must be given to Lockhart's "Life of Sir Walter Scott," a quite beautiful work, of which its excessive length is the only fault. In all literature, surely, there can be few things more moving than the record of Sir Walter's later years, of his superb struggle against adversity. Mrs. Gaskell's "Charlotte Brontë" was mentioned above. I think it merits a place in our list. It is an excellent specimen of the short biography: it is not uncritical, yet never unsympathetic. For our remaining two, perhaps Stanley's "Life of Arnold" and Forster's "Life of Dickens" may be chosen. Doubtless there are others which many readers prefer; the memoir of Charles Kingsley, for example, has had an enduring vogue. More

recently the lives of Archbishop Benson and Lord Tennyson have been admirably written, and I am really doubtful whether Mrs. Creighton's work, to which allusion has been made already, ought not to have a place among the best. Then there is the biography of Lord Beaconsfield, of which but an instalment has yet appeared; but its interest is mainly political. One has left out of the reckoning, too, such books as may be classified under "history"—Carlyle's "Frederick the Great," and the like. But at least our six—the lives of Dr. Johnson, Scott, Macaulay, Charlotte Brontë, Dickens, and Dr. Arnold—will provide a store of good reading likely to suffice for one holiday. Of late years experiments have been made in what may be called composite biography; the story of a man's life has been divided up into sections, and each section made the work of a separate writer—one specially conversant with it. In theory this plan should work well; in practice it is disappointing. The resultant volume is apt to lack unity and coherence. Dr. Johnson remarked in the "Idler" that every man's life may be best written by himself: yet good autobiographies are rarer than good biographies. We cannot all see ourselves with the detachment of a S. Augustine or a Pepys. As for the average volume of "Reminiscences," with its crop of trivialities and ancient jests, it is best left alone. But if you have not read the "Memoirs and Letters of Sir James Paget,"

published some ten years ago, the omission is one to be repaired without delay. Though edited and enriched by his son, it is mainly an autobiography ; a more manly and noble piece of writing cannot easily be found.



Austere persons there are who dislike all intimate biography, who insist that our concern should be with a man's public work alone, not with his private life. Of such was Tennyson ; if, he said, he owned the one copy of an autobiography by Horace, he would hasten to destroy it. That does not strike one as a reasonable view. After all, a man's published work is only a more or less imperfect expression of his personality, and it is the dominant force of personality, not a mere curiosity, which would make us rejoice if there came to light an authentic journal kept by William Shakespeare. Doubtless we are swayed also by the wish, persisting from childhood, to "go behind the scenes," to know how things are done. Again, the moral force of an honest biography—the greater as it is unsuspected—is not to be despised. We may be weak and insignificant ourselves, yet our range of achievement is less limited than we are apt to believe. And, reading of the struggles, the failures, the successes of someone called great by the world, yet human as we are, we set about our own little business in life with a higher aspiration, a more resolute will.

Letters for Post

(1) *To A. Ramsden, Esq., St. Boniface College, Cambridge.*

DEAR RAMSDEN,—I am asked to commend to your tutorial goodwill one Richard Craig, who proposes to honour your foundation by joining it, as an undergraduate, this term. Dick is a nice boy; I've known his people for a long time. For the last five years or so he has been at the School here, and has come to tea fairly often at my house on Sundays. It's always interesting to watch the gradual development; when first he appeared, it was as a new boy, small, rather regretting his private-school days; full of chatter when he was the only guest, but very silent if someone from the upper forms chanced to be here on the same afternoon. But for the last two terms he has been a prefect and head of his house—a person, in fact, of considerable importance. Probably he has learnt more in that way than from all his class-room lessons. And now he is a new boy again, at St. Boniface. I don't fancy he'll set the Cam on fire, but he'll be a creditable member of your community.

He's of the type that does most things fairly well ; I should guess that he'll get a place, low down, in the College boat or cricket team, but won't be chosen for the trials ; that he'll talk occasionally, and quite to the point, in the debating society, but will not hold office in the Union ; while if you can make him achieve more than a third-class in his Tripos, I shall really be driven to believe that, after all, you do know something about teaching. But his Tripos is far off at present. Meanwhile, he is, as I have said, a nice, wholesome, well-mannered boy. Most of the public-school boys—though not all of them—deserve these epithets ; most of the undergraduates—though there are exceptions—seem rather dreadful. I can't imagine, my dear Ramsden, how you—which means Cambridge and Oxford as well—contrive to turn out such products. In our own days I dare say we had our faults. But I assert, whatever you may say, that the average undergraduate of that period did not sprawl in the largest arm-chair when ladies were present ; did not contradict every statement which visitors in his father's house chanced to make ; did not regard an elaborate slovenliness as his ideal in dress—in fact, behaved more or less like a gentleman. Whereas some of the specimens I meet nowadays in vacation—well, there are exceptions, I admit, and I may have been unlucky. Anyhow, be

kind to young Craig when he comes into touch with your august self. If you are not, mind you, I'll have my revenge! Should I find that his tutor has been too severe, has rated him mercilessly, has refused him *exeat*s, and so forth—what will happen? Why, sir, this—next vacation I shall regale his eager ear with anecdotes of the undergraduate days—how well I remember them!—of a certain A. Ramsden. He shall learn how Ramsden was almost sent down for putting the college porter in the fountain; how he smashed windows in Bridge Street; how he—hush, hush! No more of this. But remember my hint.



(2) *To Mrs. Bolton, "Holmbough."*

DEAR MRS. BOLTON,—I am truly sorry to learn that the Arctic temperature of the church last Sunday morning, and a piercing draught, made it quite impossible for you, as you say, to follow the service with any attention. But draughts and the faults of the heating apparatus belong to the Churchwardens' department, not to the Vicar's. By the way, are you acquainted with Miss Cross, of Sandown Lodge, who usually occupies the next chair to yours in church? As she found the temperature too high on Sunday, I fancy that an exchange of seats with her might be mutually advantageous.



(3) To Miss Cross, Sandown Lodge.

DEAR MISS CROSS,—I am much concerned to hear that you were almost asphyxiated in church last Sunday morning. I chanced, indeed, to notice that your eyes were closed through almost the whole of my colleague's sermon; but if, as you say, the temperature was simply tropical, one cannot blame you. The Churchwardens are really the people to whom your complaint should be addressed. I find, however, that Mrs. Bolton, of "Holmbough," who sits next to you, believed herself to be in some danger of frostbite on Sunday. I am unable to explain this remarkable climatic difference, but I would suggest that you and Mrs. Bolton should exchange places.

*(4) To the Rev. T. H. Asperlin, Little Pilditch, Worcs.*

DEAR ASPERLIN,—I'm very glad to know that you have been asked to preach in the Cathedral; that will be good for you, and good for the people who listen to you. I gather that you want me to advise you as to the kind of sermon that will be suitable. Well, the chances are that the sermon you deliver at Little Pilditch on the Sunday morning will suit admirably the nave-service in the Cathedral on Sunday night. There will not be quite the same need, of course, to translate the

words that come naturally to you into their very simplest equivalents. But, for goodness' sake, get out of your head any notion that your Cathedral sermon is to be a "special effort"; that it must make a parade of learning; that you must adorn it with quotations from Bergson, von Hügel, and the last number of the "*Hibbert Journal*." Of such preaching the Cathedral congregation gets quite enough. In fact, I should advise you to banish that phrase "Cathedral congregation" from your mind. At home you speak to, say, 150 people; at the Cathedral nave-service there are about 1500—but the point of numbers is the only real difference; whether under one roof or another, human nature is much the same; human beings in either place have the same sins, virtues, soul-hunger. If you will just imagine that your village church has been enlarged, with an increased congregation to match, and will speak almost in the same way as you would do in your own pulpit, I am sure that your sermon will be useful. This is rather a didactic letter—but then you asked for advice, and it's not so very long since your ordination!

P.S.—I expect you have Dean Church's work on your shelves. If so, turn to "*Village Sermons*," second series, p. 20, and to "*The Message of Peace*," p. 159. There you will find the same sermon, on the same text—in the one volume as preached in a small village church; in the

other volume as preached in St. Paul's Cathedral. You will be struck by the small difference between the two versions. Yet the alterations are highly significant. You couldn't possibly have a better object-lesson.



(5) *To Colonel Fanshawe, Kroonstad Villa.*

DEAR COLONEL,—Yes, there is pretty good authority for the word “altar,” to the use of which you object so strongly. If you will call here some morning, I shall hope to convince you.

By the way, let me congratulate you warmly on your silver wedding, which, I understand, you hope to keep next week. I expect it does not seem twenty-five years to you since you led your bride to the table.



(6) *To Mrs. Miggs, 15 Hawthorne Road.*

DEAR MRS. MIGGS,—Thank you for your note. I am very glad that you found the new curate's sermon a help. As I am writing, may I suggest that you should not always sit at the extreme back of the church? It's not a good building for sound, and, wonderful as your sense of hearing is for a person of your age, might it not be less of a strain to you if you were nearer the pulpit? And I always have the feeling that you, so long a loyal supporter of the church and parish, have

every claim to be seated in the very forefront of the congregation.



(7) *To the Rev. W. Clifton, the Clergy House.*

MY DEAR CLIFTON,—I find I did you an injustice yesterday when I rather pitched into you for your last sermon. I said that your disquisition on the date and authorship of the Book of Esther wasn't likely to be of much use to the domestic servants, who form the bulk of the evening congregation. I was wrong. Mrs. Miggs has written specially to tell me how much she liked your sermon. She is a little puzzled as to why you should have preached it early in Lent, but she says that your explanation of Easter was beautiful.



(8) *To Miss Laetitia Simpkins, The Nook.*

DEAR MISS SIMPKINS,—It was most kind of you to send me a copy of your manuscript hymn for Trinity Sunday, "O parabolic clover-leaf." But I fear there are some difficulties in the way of substituting it, as you suggest, for "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty" next Sunday morning. I quite agree with you that it would be a change, and that your hymn is different from the ordinary "Ancient and Modern" style. But people are very conservative about hymns,

as you know, and are apt to resent the disappearance of an old favourite. Also our service and hymn-lists are already printed for this month. I don't think Dr. Armstrong, our organist, would care to alter them at a day's notice; and, in any case, I fear we should hardly do justice to your tune. For I notice that the treble part ranges over two complete octaves, which could only be managed by voices more out of the common than ours. Of course, the difficulty about the words could be got over, as you suggest, by the churchwardens ordering a thousand copies to be printed, and, as you say, the effect would be more striking if the lines were printed in red, black, and gold. But again, there is a difficulty here owing to the expense. For more than one reason, therefore, it seems impossible to act upon your kind proposal, for which, however, I am much obliged.



(9) *To the Rev. Canon W. Otterby, Puddlecombe Vicarage.*

DEAR WILLIAM,—You're a lucky beast! Don't I wish I were you! Three weeks' fishing; pick of the season; preserved water. I repeat—lucky beast! I had three *days*, sir, three paltry days, after Easter. Two of them were indifferent, with a biting nor'-easter; on the third, the river was in flood; a rich red colour. One might

as well have thrown a fly in Regent Street. The inn was like unto most inns. Wicker-work chairs, horse-hair sofa. Pictures, engravings after Landseer. Dinner menu : Monday, beef and rhubarb pudding ; Tuesday, mutton and rhubarb tart. Very wholesome, no doubt. Desperate contests in the morning for the one bathroom. . . . I wish there were a Society for the Reform of English Inns.

I am scribbling this during a County Council Committee meeting. It's not an exciting affair. Every now and again the chairman remarks, all in one breath, "Those-in-favour-say-ay-the-contrary-no-the-motion-is-carried," so doubtless we are making progress. At this moment an old gentleman is struggling through an apparently interminable speech, most of which is inaudible. But I gather that his heart is vexed within him because tiles instead of slates have been used to roof some council school. He has just favoured me with a glance of distinct approval, believing me to be taking copious notes of his wise remarks. Outside the sun shines, and I catch a glimpse of young leaves stirring in the wind. Well, this business seems a bit remote, but I trust that we are helping the cause of education somehow ! All the same, when I think of you by the riverside I turn a delicate green with envy. Now the old gentleman has done, and the chairman invites us to consider "the report of the Sanitary

Sub-Committee." William, William, I repeat that you are a lucky beast !



(10) *To Augustus Plantagenet, Esq., 543 New Bond Street.*

MY DEAR SIR,—This is too kind of you ! I believe that this is the third circular with which you've favoured me in the last few weeks. How beautifully it is lithographed, and what a fine crest you have ! And you seem to be longing, simply longing, to lend me any sum of money, absolutely without security, and repayable at borrower's convenience. I had not thought of troubling you, for my bank account does not happen to be overdrawn. But, as you insist, shall we say £10,000, repayable in one sum 999 years hence ?

P.S.—On second thoughts, I shall not post this letter.

The Point of View

To write this chapter were far easier but for the space there needs must be between the moment of writing and that of reading. One can procrastinate, indeed, despite copy-book warnings; one can still be meditating a choice of pleasant themes what time a printer distraught passionately urges speed. Yet, tarry as one may, the page must be filled many days before it comes to the reader's eye—many days, which may have brought one knows not what of change. Were no such interval enforced, were the sheet carried straight from the typewriter to you, my reader, I could be sure of gaining your applause. For then I would discourse of the "heat-wave," as the newspapers name our present variety of weather, and your forehead, if not your eye, would be moist with sympathy. You might pardon me, I think, even were these ten pages left blank—a pleasant, cool expanse of white, with just a modest footnote beneath the first to explain that literary work was incompatible with a temperature of 84 deg. in the shade. Looking forth from the study window, I see a deck-chair which invites to tranquil thought; or, if more strenuous

pursuits compel, there are flower-beds thirsting for the hose. Also—this is a very annoying fact indeed, although you won't believe me—about two hours ago a small brown rabbit was seen scampering among the beds. If I do not catch that small brown rabbit, the little beast will fare sumptuously upon my carnations. What to do with him when caught is a problem hard of solution. Perchance my neighbour is a man of rural tastes. What more pleasant for a jaded townsman than to see a rabbit frolicking upon his lawn in the summer dusk? Why selfishly should I hug this joy to myself? Why not deftly drop that small brown rabbit over the hedge——? But, hush! I must not be indiscreet. And the chance for such altruism is not yet secure. First catch your rabbit, as Mrs. Glasse is thought to have advised. (In point of fact, that proverbial remark about first catching your hare, commonly attributed to her, cannot be found in any edition of her work on cookery.) Anyhow, my point is that to swelter indoors, to tap the typewriter, must be, in the present state of the atmosphere, absurd.



But a chill gale may be blowing, while raindrops trickle down the window, when this paper chances to be read by some hapless man immured in lodgings or hotel, who will wax furious as he reads complaints of fine, hot weather—just what he

needed for his holiday. No sympathy is bestowed upon the wretch who perspired to fill his pages in tropic heat ; instead, the volume is flung angrily to the ground. Everything depends, you see, upon the point of view. "Horrible weather !" growls the cricketer ; "A beautiful rain !" says the cheerful angler. It is amazing, if you come to think of it, how vastly the personal equation shapes judgments the most honest. Here, in two newspapers of different political beliefs, are the "Parliamentary sketches" of last night's debate. From the "Trumpet" I learn that the Right Hon. Mr. X was "in his happiest vein" ; that "his speech elicited keen interest in every quarter of the House, and was punctuated throughout with cheers." On the other hand, Mr. Y's reply, though "eagerly anticipated," proved a sad disappointment. He was "obviously discomfited" ; spoke with "unusual hesitation, often losing the thread of his sentences," with the result that his own followers "made no effort to conceal their chagrin" when discussing his speech in the Lobby. All this, you see, is not a mere expression of opinion ; it appears to be a plain record of facts. But then I pick up the "Bugle," study its "sketch" of the same episode—and begin to wonder whether I am not reading an old number by mistake, a number describing some other debate. For the "Bugle" assures me that the Right Hon. Mr. X's attack was "lame in the extreme," that it was spoken

“amid gloomy silence, scarcely broken by one perfunctory cheer,” and that it “elicited a brilliant and crushing reply from Mr. Y,” whose “wit and merciless logic provided an intellectual treat which delighted his opponents hardly less than his supporters.” Now, what are we to make of this conflict? Must we hold that one sketch-writer or the other wilfully perverted facts in order to placate his readers or his editor? No doubt the brilliancy or dulness of a speech is a point in regard to which opinions may differ. Yet there could not be at once continuous cheers and a gloomy silence; either the “Trumpet” or the “Bugle” affirms the thing which was not.



Nevertheless, I believe that each reporter may have been honest to the full, may have felt that he was writing a quite dispassionate and fair account of what he saw or heard. Those divergent paragraphs are just the fruit of emphatic prepossessions; the debate was seen from two opposite points of view. Indeed, this is a factor dominant in politics. It is one, perhaps, which Mr. Asquith forgot when, a few years ago, he proposed to create five hundred new Peers. Conceive him thus equipped. Obediently they don their robes, obediently they troop into the House of Lords and vote as the Liberal cause requires. For a session, for a few years perhaps, that fidelity will endure—

but afterwards ? Afterwards (so cheerfully I would wager) their creeds will change ; many of them, and more of their eldest sons, will become thorough Tories ; others, having voted on the Liberal side often enough to pay, so to speak, for their coronets, will leave Parliamentary business alone. The Radical Commoner's point of view is remote from the Peer's, and nothing can alter that fact. Bishops, again, regard the world and its needs otherwise than do their subordinates. No one would assert that all bishops are alike, and generalisation may seem rash. None the less, there is such a thing as the distinctively episcopal mind ; there is an episcopal vocabulary, an episcopal method of speaking about Church affairs. No one was more pungently satirical on the theme than my friend Z. The conservatism, the timidity, the erastianism of the episcopal bench—such was his pet topic of conversation. He had his admirers, and “if only Z could be made a bishop !” was their sigh. He would surprise the rest ; he would sweep away the old traditions ; he would show us what a bishop really ought to be. And then one fine day the incredible happened—Z was nominated to a See. His friends were ecstatic in their joy. Z would wake us all up ; Z would astonish those feeble folk, his colleagues. Did he fulfil these hopes ? Of course not. Almost from the day of his consecration he became the most decorous, the most strictly conventional, of all the bishops.

Another aspect of affairs had become his ; he saw things from the episcopal point of view.



That all criticism is modified in this way can scarcely be doubted. I am, let us suppose, a reviewer of unassailable honesty, averse from the rolling logs. Suppose, however, Mr. Jones's "History of Philosophy" reaches me to-day, with a stern editorial request for an immediate review. In the autumn I might read the pages with care ; note in Chapter XLVI an imperfect acquaintance with Professor Utterbosch's treatise, applaud the intimate knowledge of Ethiopic idealism (or what not)—in a word, produce a weighty, well-informed article, paying measured tribute to the erudition of Jones. But to-day ? Well, can anyone really enjoy a "History of Philosophy" when the temperature is 84 deg. in the shade ? Do you imagine that I shall struggle with enormous folios in order to verify Jones's references ? No ; a few commonplace sentences are all that I can fashion to-day. Mr. Jones's latest work does not fall below the level of his earlier volumes ; doubtless it will be welcomed by those who are interested in its theme—and so forth. Or you, my reader, are yourself a critic, let us suppose. A romance falls into your hands—"The Fortune of Timothy," by A. Smith—and I do trust that this be not the actual title of a real novel. It is neither better nor worse than

a hundred others. You write a few lines in a rather patronising tone about it, rounded off, perhaps, with some remarks about the commonplace character of modern fiction. But suppose that A. Smith is not quite a stranger to you. As you take up the book you identify her with that very pleasant Miss Arabella Smith whom you took in to dinner a few nights ago. She was pretty, and a good talker, and showed a creditable admiration for your own immortal works. Do not these facts influence your point of view? Do you not, in consequence, read the book more carefully—to find, in all good faith, merits in it which you might not have discerned had Miss Arabella been a total stranger? Once more, people who mock the conflicting judgment of literary critics forget that they differ widely in their ideas of a novel's purpose, and shape their verdicts accordingly. Ought the romance to amuse and charm, or ought it to aim at art for art's sake, or should it be a sociological treatise in order to justify its existence? I regard a carnation plant as something which should produce a beautiful flower. That abominable brown rabbit—do I see its ears among that patch of mignonette? No; it is only a shadow—that brown rabbit regards it as a succulent salad. Therefore the rabbit and I look at a carnation plant from different points of view.



Success in literary art, I suppose, means partly the power of placing other people at one's own standpoint, of persuading them to see things as the writer sees them. When the critic praises a story as "convincing," this is really what he means by his overworked adjective. The tale moves or charms us ; the characters are alive because the author has succeeded in making us look at the world temporarily through his spectacles. Because he can do this effectively we account, rightly enough, an author like Thackeray far greater than (let us say) Mr. Henry James. One names the latter for purposes of comparison, since he is a consummate master of technique. A young writer could study his works with great profit. Yet they leave us cold ; we marvel at their exquisite skill in construction, their deftness of method, while not for a moment does Mr. James make his point of view ours. When we read "Vanity Fair," on the other hand, we are beguiled into sharing the Thackerayan outlook on the world. With music the case may be somewhat different ; it is a vaguer, more elusive art. If two musical people listen to some great composition, are the thoughts, the mental pictures which it suggests to them identical? And are they those which were before the composer when he framed his melody? Probably not ; one fancies that a Beethoven symphony or a Chopin nocturne speaks to no two souls in quite the same way. Indeed, when a composer tries to

enforce his point of view upon us by what is called "programme" music—by, that is, a running commentary in words, explaining precisely what mental picture each theme is designed to bring before us—we are apt to feel resentful.



If—as this evening, at least, I feel assured—our point of view is influenced by temperature, it must be so by other outward factors—by what scientists term our environment. Don't you feel this, supposing you are a town-dweller, when you find yourself in some really remote country district? There are many hundreds of them still, thank goodness, in England; districts where life must be essentially the same as it was centuries ago. You are fifty miles, perhaps, from any large town, perhaps a dozen from a railway station. Here, as far as eye can see, are leafy lanes and stretching fields, and, far apart, a farmhouse or two, with a few cottages about it, and an ancient church tower half hidden among the trees. The whole landscape has an air of placid content in the summer sunshine. So still is it that one can hear a farm-wagon lumbering down the road a quarter of a mile away. Presently the red sun gets low; the rooks fly cawing to the copse. . . . Supposing Ministries fall, or flying-machines cross the sea—nay, supposing our whole system of government were changed, or even that an invader landed at

the other end of England—it might be long before the news reached such a neighbourhood, nor would it seem greatly to touch the tranquil lives spent here. Even to the chance visitor public affairs seem less urgent here. He sees public affairs in a new perspective. Party rancour dies down. Here, he feels, is the true England ; not the England of halfpenny newspapers and taxi-cabs and factories, but the England of brook and orchard and good brown earth, the England that has endured through the ages—and surely will endure.



Do you know the mood I have attempted, baldly enough, to describe ? Of course the town life is real enough too, and has its own romance. . . . I need not pause to write of it, for my task is done. But (mopping a heated brow) I wonder if what is set down here will have your sympathy or if you will judge it a meaningless rigmarole ? It all depends, you see, upon your point of view !

The Christmas Vigil

THE Shepherds heard the Seraph speak to them
Of Christ our Saviour, born in Bethlehem.

Then shafts of radiance clave the midnight sky,
Whence, in soft melody—
As when thick-clustered trees
Stirred by a languorous breeze
Whisper awhile and cease—
In unimaginable harmony
Came the far music : “ Peace !
Peace upon earth, God’s peace ! ”

Then the light quickened, broke into flame,
In the sheen whereof myriads of angels came :
Many, and more, till the height
Blazed with a passion of light ;
Eastward, westward, yea, to the uttermost
Summit of heaven ranged the magnificent host !
Louder and louder swelled the triumphing strain, and
the sound

Echoed and rolled and broke on the quivering ground,
Smote in tumultuous waves the tremulous planets
around :

“ Glory to God in the highest ! ”—onward the seraphim
trod

The paths of the air as they sang—“ Glory, Glory to
God,

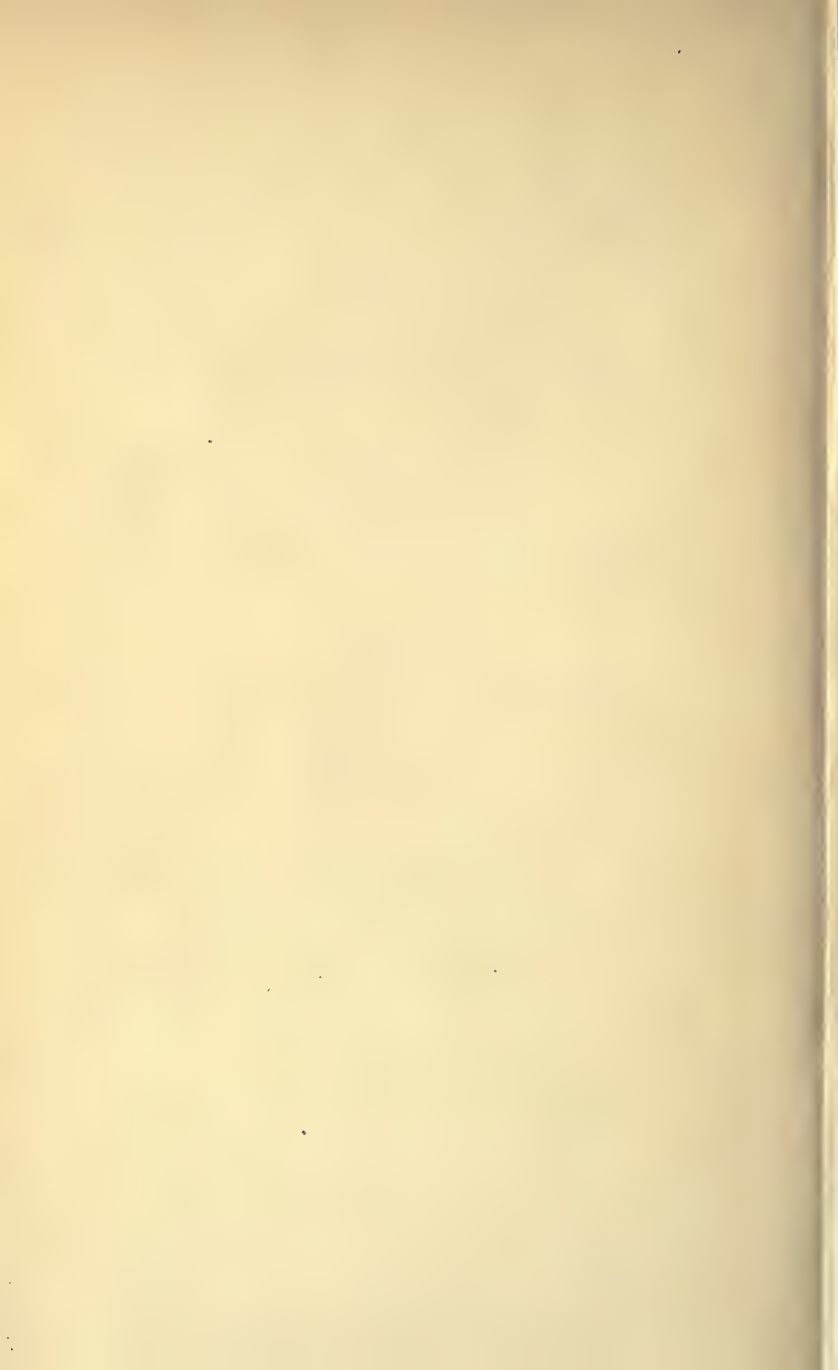
Glory to God in the highest ! ”—in resonant chorus,
and then :

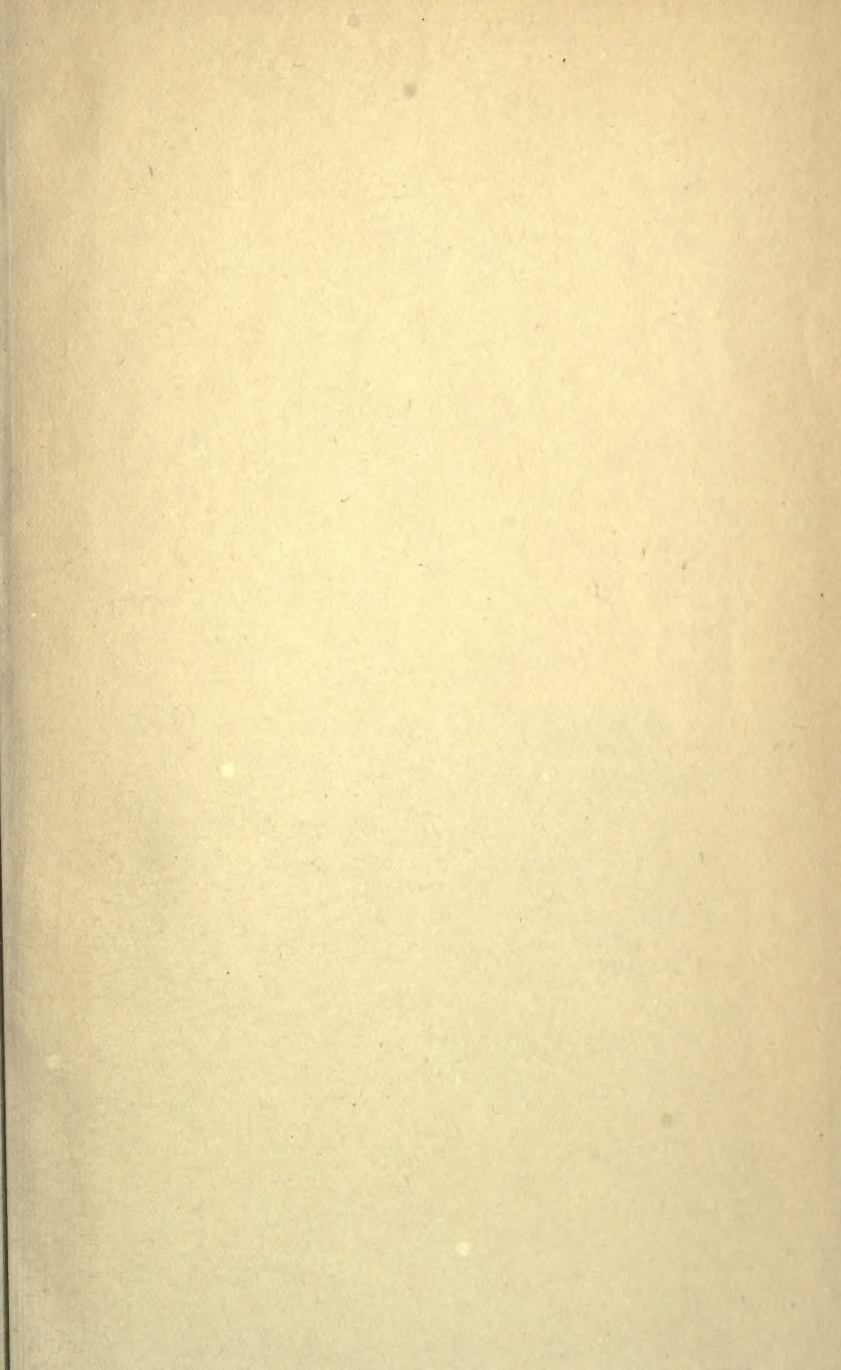
“ Peace on the earth, God’s peace ! Goodwill towards
men.”

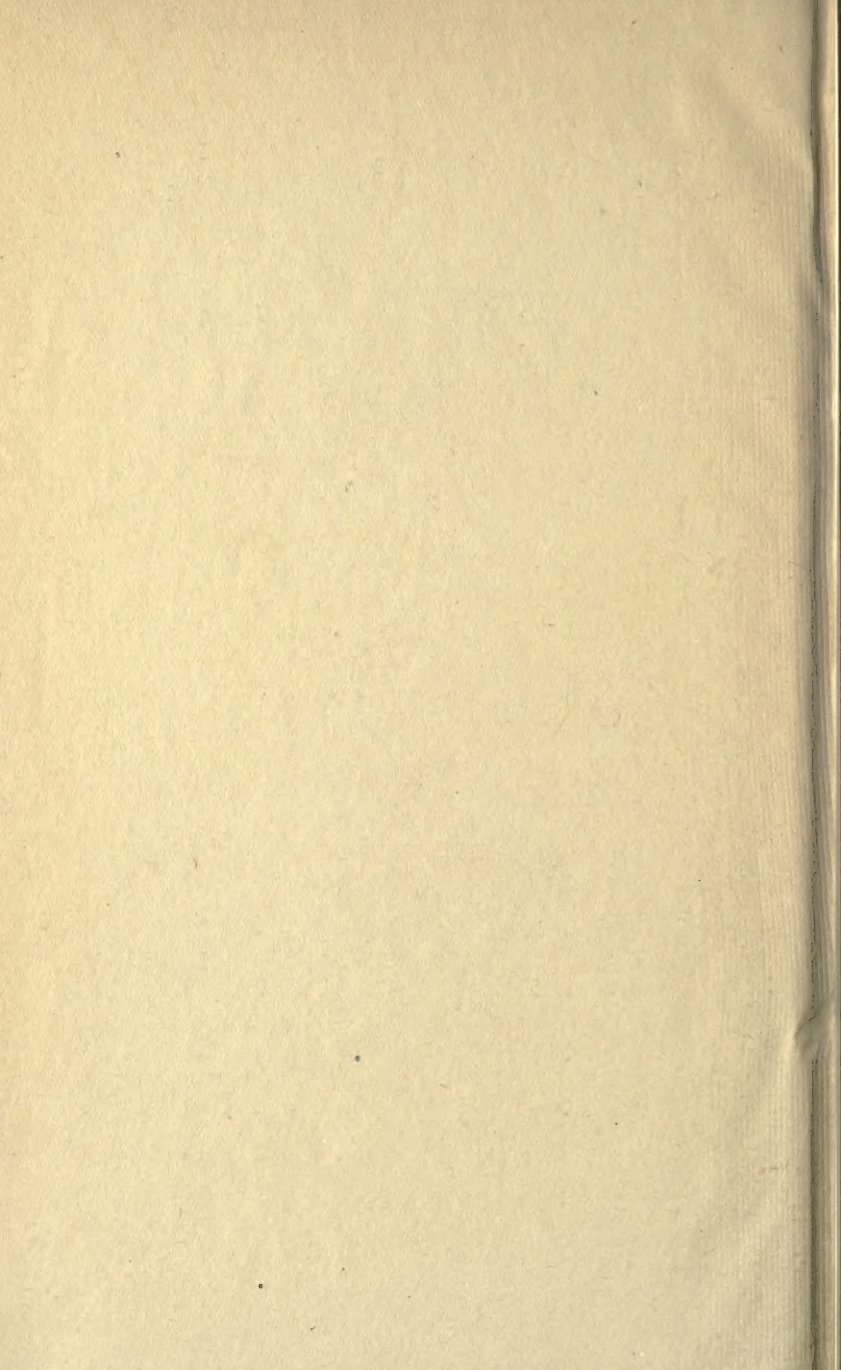
Into the infinite height they passed ;
Slowly, in tranquil rays,
Faded the white intolerable blaze ;
The melody rose and fell ; at last
It paused, to cease ;
Yet one clear whisper, one melodious note
Through the far empyrean seemed to float :
“ Peace upon earth,
God’s peace ! ”

Once more to ear and sight
Deep stillness and the impenetrable night.

The Shepherds rose, and hastened on their way
To find the Stable where the Saviour lay.







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